

SOCIAL WORK

W. EDWARD
CHADWICK, D.D., B.Sc.



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EDITED BY

THE REV. W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF WYCLIFFE HALL, OXFORD

SOCIAL WORK

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SOCIAL WORK

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"THE FIRST CHURCH WORKERS," ETC. ETC.

Ἐαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν.

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SOCIAL WORK

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IN this little book much may be looked for which will not be found. The number of works upon the "Social Question," upon "Social Problems," and "Social Work" is so great that I may be accused of at least a measure of rashness in adding yet another to those already published.

But most of the books which I have in mind deal with particular social difficulties, or with special departments, or special aspects of the social problem. We have books upon "Poverty"—its various causes, phenomena, and results; and in these books will also be found a number of suggestions of various kinds for its removal. We have several valuable books upon the "Poor Law"—its history, its administration in the past and in the present, its deficiencies and its frequent evil effects; in these, again, will be found many ideas, of more or less value, for its reform. We have quite a number of books upon subjects connected with the "Land"—its ownership, taxation, and voluntary and compulsory sale; and also upon the allied, or rather dependent, subjects of "Rural Housing," and "Rural Depopulation," and upon "Village Life" generally. Then we have many books upon the terrible evil of "Intemperance"—its causes and effects; in these we shall also find suggestions for its abatement by different methods, *e.g.* by reforms in our "Licensing System" or by counter attractions to the public-house or the drinking club. Lastly, there is quite a literature upon the many difficult problems connected with



"Industrial Life" to-day—works dealing with "Unemployment," "Wages," "Sweating," "Child Labour," etc. etc. All these books are attempts to deal with different specific social difficulties, and to redress various specific social evils or social wrongs. But "Social Work" rightly understood is something more than even the sum of the efforts to deal in detail with the aggregate of social imperfections. It should not aim only at dealing with things as they are, it should rather imply "all kinds of work done by people with the specific intention of making the world better and happier"¹ A book on "Social Work" from this point of view will therefore lay very special stress upon "Education" of every kind, and still greater stress upon wise and useful *training* which, of course, should be the primary object of all educational effort.

The education upon which I would here lay stress must be directed towards supplying two very pressing needs: first, the very general want of education or training in the workers themselves, which prevents them from doing much more useful social work than they may be doing at the present time; secondly, the want of education among those for whom the work is being done. To give this latter education must be the chief aim of the social worker, who must give it either by the direct method of teaching, or by the indirect method of diffusing and inculcating higher and better ideals of both character and circumstances.

To-day among both amateur and voluntary social workers we hear frequent expressions of disappointment with the results of their work; they feel they have expended their strength in vain and to no purpose. The most usual causes of this want of success and consequent disappointment are: (1) a want of knowledge of the conditions—of the complexity, and so of the difficulty—of the problem they are attempting to solve; and (2) a want of skill—arising from want of training—in expending their energy to the best possible effect. It is no exaggeration when we say that a social worker without some knowledge of the laws of social

¹ Professor S. J. Chapman.

welfare and of the conditions of social progress¹ might be likened to a man who, without a scientific knowledge of physical and mechanical laws and forces, should attempt to construct a mountain railway. Until recently it was doubtless very difficult to acquire either the knowledge or the training requisite for useful social service. But that is so no longer. The opportunities for obtaining both are, or should be, easily available. Where they are not so, it is the fault of those responsible for supplying themselves and others with them. There is certainly no lack of excellent material.

In our various parishes to-day there are large numbers of men and women engaged in social work of one kind or another, *e.g.* in teaching, or in visiting with different objects. That the great majority of these workers are almost wholly untrained is partly their own fault, it is also partly the fault of those who should consider themselves responsible for their training. Some, of course, will not submit to be trained; others will not take the trouble, or perhaps will not make the small self-sacrifice necessary to procure even a few of the books, now published at a very cheap price, from which they might get most valuable help. Then, in many parishes I fear it is still true that the clergyman makes no effort to train his workers. Possibly in regard to the rendering of efficient social service he is largely himself untrained. This last condition will, I hope, become more and more rare as bishops and examining chaplains and others who are responsible for the education and efficiency of the clergy realise how essential some knowledge of social science and actual social conditions, as well as some training in social work, are to those who have to fill the position which the clergyman occupies.

If I may digress for a moment, I would point out that this want of efficiency in the clergy is not due to any want of ideals on the part of the Church. The first words of the bishop in the service for "the Making of Deacons" demand that those presented to him for ordination be

¹ See chapter on "The Theory of Society" in Professor Giddings' *Elements of Sociology*.

"apt and meet for their learning and godly conversation to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying of His Church." Then, the first question put to the candidates by the bishop speaks of their serving God "for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people." It is impossible to dissociate these phrases from the words in Ephes. iv. 11 ff, where we read that certain men are appointed to perform certain functions in the Church, "with a view to the equipping of the saints" (*i.e.* the members of the Church), with a twofold object: (1) "for the work of ministering," (2) "for the building up of the body of the Christ" (the ideal society). The object of the pastors, who are also to be teachers, is to equip others in order that these latter may be helpful in edifying the society. The "honour of God" and the "glory of God" are surely "promoted" where society is brought into such a state that each individual within it is, through its conditions, able to realise the best and highest of which he is capable.

Therefore, without entering into details at present, I would begin this book with two strong pleas. The first is, that of all kinds of social work that which is educational must be considered as the most important. It is, I believe, certainly the most permanent in its effects. The second is, that those who take up any kind of social work shall do their utmost to train themselves, or to be trained, to become *efficient* workers, at least in the particular branch of work they have chosen; and that those who are in any position of responsibility shall recognise their responsibility by becoming so fully equipped themselves that they may be able to assist in equipping others.

I have already hinted that usually much too narrow a meaning is attached to the term "Social Work." By this term there is generally implied only, or at least chiefly, what I should call *ambulance* work. When we talk to the great majority of workers among the poor, they almost invariably at once begin to tell us of "difficult" and "distressing" cases. Frequently they can furnish us with a painfully long list of these, and about each they can generally furnish us

with many details. The poverty or the sickness in these cases they try most earnestly to alleviate; and, where the suffering is seen to be the direct result of evil doing, they often make heroic efforts to reclaim the evil doers, or at least to obtain some good influence over them. This kind of work, in its way, is excellent. It may be compared to the ambulance work which is constantly being done in time of war, and which must be done. For so long as life is a struggle, and in this present world life will certainly always be more or less of a struggle, so long will some amount of this ambulance work be necessary. In other words, the kindly office of the "Good Samaritan" will be needed. But the scientifically trained worker, who has been taught to look beneath phenomena to their causes, to look beyond what we may term the pathological conditions of society to the sources of these—for poverty, unemployment, intemperance, etc., may be regarded as social diseases—the scientifically trained social worker will no more be content to do ambulance work than the scientifically trained physician is content to alleviate symptoms. The one as surely as the other will seek to discover and to remove the sources of the disease.

The story of the Good Samaritan may here suggest at least two useful thoughts for the social worker: First, that considering the evil repute of the road, every effort should be made to secure that the journey from Jericho to Jerusalem is rendered as safe as possible for the traveller; secondly, that the analogy between the way in which what is termed charitable assistance is usually given and the action of the Good Samaritan fails in one very important particular. We are at least led to suppose that both the self-sacrifice of the Good Samaritan and the efficacy of his action were very much more complete than what ours usually are. The words "Whatsoever thou spendest more . . . I will repay thee," at least warrant the assumption that the Good Samaritan made himself responsible for *all* that was essential for the complete restoration of the sufferer. Contrast this with the way in which we usually do ambulance work. Far too often, by the gift of one or more small sums

of money in cases of poverty or distress, we simply administer to the sufferer a stimulant, or more probably a narcotic, whose effects are extremely temporary, and which tends to leave him, when these effects have worn off, in a worse condition than before.

Speaking from more than twenty-five years of experience in various populous parishes, each of which has contained a large proportion of very poor people, I should say that far too many of those who work among the very poor are contented with doing this ambulance work; and, while I admire the spirit in which they do it, I do not think the majority do even this work wisely. By too many of these workers it is still taken for granted that the wish, or impulse, to do good, combined with an earnest effort to do it, must inevitably issue in beneficial results. Whereas, alas, too often it is just the contrary which actually happens. Still, a brighter day is dawning, and slowly, though very slowly, it is being more widely recognised that for efficient social service, as for any other kind of useful service, at least some training is necessary.

Before I pass from this subject let me say that I would not have my readers infer that I deprecate the giving of all kinds of temporary assistance. On the contrary, I believe that very often the giving of such assistance is the best of all modes of distributing charity; only we must look very clearly beyond the gift to the probable results of the gift. To put it briefly, we must, as far as possible, so give temporary assistance as to produce a permanently beneficial result. Here the analogy of the work of the physician will help us. The usual object with which we claim his temporary assistance is to restore us to as permanent as possible a condition of health. Of course we demand that his assistance shall be adequate, and be calculated to effect the end we have in view. This condition must be remembered by those who give temporary assistance in cases of poverty and sickness. We must so give that a permanent restoration to a condition of physical or economic welfare is made possible. To give a sovereign or two—in instalments if necessary—to provide extra nourishment during

illness, or to assist the breadwinner of a family who has been ill, or the overworked mother and housewife to go for a fortnight to the seaside or into the country are, I speak from experience, among the most useful of all the ways of bestowing charity. Convalescence by such help is more rapidly effected, health is more quickly restored, and the worker, upon whose labour possibly the welfare of a whole family depends, is the sooner enabled to discharge the responsibilities of his or her position.

Before closing this chapter I would like to add a word of caution against our being (often quite unconsciously) satisfied with the effects *upon ourselves* of our bestowing of charity, instead of concentrating our attention on its probable effects upon those to whom we give it. We hear a pitiful tale of poverty or sickness or both, or we visit some home of misery in which these conditions exist; our feelings are, at any rate for the moment, deeply affected; we express our sorrow for the sufferers and bestow, it may be, half-a-crown or five shillings; we go away "feeling thankful that we have been able to help"; possibly we are very well satisfied with ourselves at the liberality we have shown; but we do not stay to ask ourselves either how the five shillings will be spent, or, even if it be spent to the best advantage, how long it will stay the pangs of hunger or provide for the needs of the sick. We have only to reflect upon such an action to see that no mere giving of money can be a substitute for personal service. Such an action is not a "social" act in any sense of the word. Our own peace of mind is probably quite the largest factor in the motive which caused us to give. It is so easy to forget that all effective social service demands a large measure of personal service, that is, a service into which the whole personality enters.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED OF KNOWLEDGE

EVERY social worker approaches or pursues his task with certain presuppositions, ideas, or convictions. A person's mental content at any particular moment is part of *himself* at that moment, and therefore will to some extent determine what he would do, *i.e.* his objects; it determines also the way in which he seeks to attain these objects, *i.e.* his methods. Because I am what I am, I desire what I desire, and I act as I act.

This book is written for those who approach the work of social improvement, or social reform, from the *Christian* point of view, that is, with Christian convictions. Let me say at once that I use the word "Christian" here in a very broad sense, and quite apart from any "particular-ecclesiastical" interpretation.

The fact that a man (or a woman) is a Christian will largely determine both his (or her) objects and methods as a social worker. The Christian worker cannot be satisfied to aim at a condition of merely material social welfare; he cannot be content to employ simply material means to effect his purpose.

Undoubtedly what may broadly be termed "materialism" has to-day a very strong hold upon a large section of the so-called "working classes," though not upon them only. Their aims and objects are to a great extent materialistic. Their desires are apt to be limited to a larger—they would say, and probably so far with truth, to a more just and equitable—share of material things; they wish for more money, more food, more and better clothes, and better houses, etc. Among them there is undoubtedly a tendency

to think that a man's life *does* to a great extent "consist in the abundance of the material things which he possesses." Unfortunately this creed has in recent years been taught the poor more and more effectively by those who have amassed, or inherited, a very large share of material things; and who seem, with ever-increasing ostentation, desirous of flaunting before the eyes of the less fortunate the power which material riches give, and the pleasures they are able to provide.

It is doubtless true that among the more highly educated and more thoughtful a materialistic philosophy of life is becoming more and more discredited. But this discrediting of materialism has not yet taken effect among the less educated. One thing the intelligent social worker gradually learns is that, as far as religious and intellectual difficulties are concerned, many of the so-called working classes are in their knowledge of these difficulties from five to fifty years behind the more educated. One proof of this may be found in the large number of cheap reprints of agnostic works, *whose copyright has expired*, and whose arguments have long ago been refuted; though this is unknown to those who purchase them.

The effects of this materialistic philosophy of life are everywhere apparent among the very poor and the uneducated to-day; for we must remember that a widely prevalent view of life governs not only the conduct of those who consciously accept it, but that it tends to set the fashion among the whole class to which these belong. Then, the less well educated people are, the more are they tempted, not only to judge, but actually to estimate values, by *external* things. A materialistic tendency increases this temptation. Evidence of this may be seen almost everywhere at present. We notice it especially in regard to dress, and, to some extent, also in regard to furniture. And with what result? That there is a rage for cheapness, especially for cheap clothing and cheap finery. The demand creates the supply. Here we have at least one of the sources of "sweated" industries.

Those who will think carefully will see here an interest-

ing example of the actual results of the absence of an adequate philosophy of life, such as Christianity offers. Indeed, it is not difficult to trace the connection between a materialistic view of life and the slavery of the sweated worker; for this slavery, which is an instance of the wrong use of one class of human beings by another class, arises ultimately from a false conception of human nature. The workers who are imbued with a materialistic view of life are (if unconsciously) helping to produce the sweated toilers; and the existence of these (though this fact, again, is unrecognised by these materialists) is actually tending to lower the wages which they themselves are earning. An inadequate conception of human nature must result in widespread oppression.

In the immediate past there have been signs of a tendency to separate "religious" and "social" work; though, recently, owing to the action of certain religious workers,¹ this tendency seems to have been checked. Any tendency towards this separation must be combated, for should it grow, infinite loss will result to both kinds of work, which actually should not be regarded as different works but as the same. What is termed social work gives a very tangible and very necessary object to religious work; while, if we regard our social work from the religious point of view, we are immediately provided with the right spirit in which it should be done, and the true motive for it. Of nothing is it more true than it is of social work that the moment you connect anything—any work, or purpose, or movement, or effort—with God, it immediately becomes sacred, and so becomes great. Social work is work done for man, but not for man only. Man is the material upon which we work, and out of which we seek to achieve our object. The way in which we treat our material will depend upon our conception of the value of that material; and only true Christianity gives us the highest possible conception of man. The infinite value of the human soul is one of the outstanding messages of the New Testament. True

¹ Chiefly members of the "Christian Social Union."

Christianity teaches us a reverence for man as does no other religion, or other philosophy of life. The history of the past and the experience of the present unite in showing us, that it is only in those countries where a right conception of the doctrine of the Incarnation has had influence that we find a due reverence paid to man, an adequate value set on human nature or on human life. Therefore I would plead most strongly for the strengthening by all possible means of the Christian inspiration in all our social work, also for the Christian motive and purpose as the final motive and purpose with which the work is done.

I have laid stress upon the religious aspect of social work because I believe that in taking up any kind of work, and in the doing of the work, we must consider not only our motive for taking it up, we must consider also the spirit in which we intend to work, or actually are working. When we have said that both the motive and the spirit must be *Christian*—must be those of Christ Himself—we have asserted that the motive must be the highest possible, and the spirit the purest conceivable. Any lower motive is sure to admit some taint of selfishness; any spirit less pure will to some extent obscure that vision of the Divine, which is the one adequate inspiration for a mission to our brethren.¹

I now proceed to consider the further equipment of the social worker. In this equipment I would put *knowledge* in the first place. The work is at once so important and so delicate, the amount of both good and harm which may be done is so great, that we cannot afford to be ignorant. It might have been expected that I should have put self-sacrifice in the first place; but, surely, self-sacrifice is assumed in the possession of the Christian spirit. It was in the spirit of self-sacrifice that Christ came into the world and that He died for man. And the first application of the spirit of self-sacrifice will be seen in the ceaseless effort which the really earnest worker makes to gain the fullest and most complete knowledge available. Study,

¹ The vision of God is the call of the prophet—the social reformer.

no less than active work, demands self-sacrifice, and possibly the self-sacrifice demanded by study is greater than that demanded by active work, because it is made in secret. The world takes account of the active worker whose activities are constantly before its eyes. It takes little or no account of the student.

The want of knowledge, especially in certain directions, exhibited by the average social worker is unfortunately great. I have known both clergymen and lay people, who for years have been earnest and devoted workers among the poor, but who never seem to have realised the necessity for acquiring even the elements of certain kinds of knowledge which are really essential for successful social work. These, of course, are people whom one generally finds complaining that their efforts are so unsuccessful.

The first kind of knowledge upon which I would lay stress is that which will help us to gain what has been termed "a Vision of the Whole."¹ Every society, every nation, town, village, family, may be regarded as an organism. It is at least this, though it is probably more. It is an organism of a very complex nature. Its present condition is the result of an immense number of various influences acting upon it in the past, also of influences acting upon it in the present.² All its various parts or members are vitally connected together and closely inter-related with each other. The society, as a whole, like a human body, has grown and has a history, though the records of that history which are available may be comparatively scanty, and therefore we cannot trace that history either far or fully. More than this, every member of this society, like every cell in the human body, has also had a gradual growth and likewise has a history. The individual members of a society, we find, have a tendency to form into groups. Thus the society of a town, or of a populous parish, is made up of a large number of social groups of various kinds; and these groups are not only closely inter-related, but they are differently constituted according

¹ The phrase is Bishop Westcott's.

² Giddings' *Elements of Sociology*, pp. 336 ff.

to the aspect from which we view the whole society. The human body, we may say, is made up of head, shoulders, arms, legs, feet, hands, etc. But from another point of view it is made up of bone, muscle, blood, nerves, etc. For instance, in a foot there is something of each one of these, there is some bone, some muscle, some blood, etc.; and again, the healthiness of the blood or of the nervous system may be very directly affected by the feet, or legs, or arms, by which we take wholesome exercise. So we may divide the people of a town into various religious groups—Anglicans, Romanists, Congregationalists, Wesleyans; we may also arrange the same people according to their occupations, their trades, and professions. Then there are the great divisions, possibly becoming more accentuated, between rich and poor, between educated and uneducated. It must be noticed how these various divisions cut across each other and make the various social problems more complex. The industrial and financial conditions in a town may, and generally do, affect its religious, educational, and philanthropic work. In times of industrial depression the various "Churches" feel a strain upon their resources, and sometimes the difficulty of providing the salaries of paid helpers. Again, in such times philanthropic work is apt to be undertaken in haste, and pursued without sufficient thought of its ultimate results. Then, undoubtedly, the religious tone of a town, the nature of the work done by the different "Churches," does affect far more than is generally realised its industrial welfare. For this last depends to a great extent upon the character of its citizens, and religion is the greatest of all character-making forces.

I would urge all social workers to try to acquire, and also to maintain, as comprehensive a view as possible of the conditions in the midst of which they are working. We must remember that where we find increasing complexity of conditions we find also an increasing tendency towards a specialisation which constantly grows narrower and more intense.¹ Let us think of the various activities

¹ Social differentiation follows social integration.

in a modern "well-worked" parish. Let us think of the various workers, all with special aims, and working, at least to some extent, independently of each other. Those who work in the Mothers' Union work independently of those who work for the Men's Society. Those who work for the Girls' Friendly Society work independently of those who are trying to get an influence over the mothers, and also of those who are working the Lads' Brigade. To some extent apart from all these will be the district visitors, and then again apart, and also apart from each other (1) those whose chief object is to promote temperance, and (2) those who would promote thrift. When I think of the immense amount of energy which in the aggregate is expended with "the specific intention of making the world happier and better," and when I think of how relatively small the effect of all this seems to be, I often wonder whether we have learnt either how to economise our energy or how to direct and apply it to the best advantage. It is, of course, far easier to make a criticism than to suggest a remedy; and it is difficult to see how the present methods of work can be largely altered; but it is most important that the various classes of workers should work in the closest possible combination,¹ and also that each separate worker should look beyond his or her particular object, *e.g.* the worker in the Men's Society should remember that a man has probably a wife and children; the worker in the Girls' Friendly Society should remember that the young woman has probably a mother and younger brothers and sisters.

But there is an even more important reason than the economy of energy for maintaining this "Vision of the Whole." Let me go back to the analogy of the human body. To-day it is regarded as essential that the specialist in any branch of medicine or of surgery shall have a wide and thoroughly scientific medical and surgical training. He who would treat successfully any one organ or function of the body must have a scientific knowledge of the composition, structure, and normal processes of the whole

¹ See further on this in chapter xv.

body. Such knowledge is regarded as essential, for example, to the throat specialist, or to the ophthalmic surgeon. One of the marks of the so-called "quack" is his want of this wide scientific knowledge. He attempts to treat some local symptom, and confines his attention to that symptom. Because he is ignorant of them he takes no account of causes and processes, or of the connection between the diseased condition of an organ and the whole system, or present state of health, of the patient. In his failure to do this (through his inability to do it) lies generally the cause of his failure.

The analogy between this position and treatment and those of the average social worker is, alas, often only too true a one. Too often the social worker, from a want of wide knowledge of the structure, the processes, and the laws governing the welfare of society as a whole, deals with each case, as he will sometimes boast, "individually." He deals with it without taking into account the evils which are producing the trouble he is seeking to cure. If he is working in a populous district he will probably find a dozen, or even scores of similar cases, all due to the same cause, or causes. While he is working for a cure, these causes are still operating and baffling his efforts. A "Vision of the Whole" would teach him that his energies might be more usefully expended in trying to remove these causes than in being content to assuage the sufferings of case after case which they were producing. The scientific physician tries to eradicate the disease from the system. To-day there are at work among the poor thousands of earnest and devoted men and women who are yet in the position of social quacks. They are always engaged in attempting to relieve distress—*alias* the symptoms of social, and very often of moral, disease—but without any scientific knowledge of sociology (I use the word in a very comprehensive sense), and therefore without any conception of the causes of the evils with which they are constantly doing battle.

It is not as if the unscientific social worker, *e.g.* one without "a Vision of the Whole," simply failed to do much good. By working ignorantly (though with the best

intentions) he may actually be doing an immense amount of harm. Let me give an illustration of this. During the last few years the amount of pauperism in London has risen rapidly. Concurrently with this many efforts to give free meals, to find free or very cheap shelters, and to provide temporary employment for those out of work, have been made by various philanthropic associations, *e.g.* by the Salvation Army, the Church Army, etc. Scientific workers among the poor, men of clear judgment, wide knowledge, and exceptional means of obtaining information, believe that not a little of the increase of the pauperism in London is due to these well-meant, but ill-considered, charitable schemes. As an example of this take the following extract from the last report of Mr. Lockwood, the poor-law inspector for the Metropolitan area: "During the year ending June 24, 1906, the number of men from the Rowton House in Hammersmith who became chargeable to the Guardians of that parish was 485, the net cost to Hammersmith being £1276. On the 7th of February 1906 a Salvation Army shelter was opened in Middlesex St., E. Since that date 389 applications for relief from the shelters have been received by the relieving officers of the City of London Guardians. In Marylebone, during the year 1906, 608 applications from shelters were received by the relieving officers, viz. 520 from the Salvation Army, 48 from the Church Army, and 40 from the Shaftesbury Shelter." To these figures Mr. Lockwood adds the following comment: "It would be extremely interesting to ascertain, were it in any way possible, how many of the frequenters of these homes and shelters have left wives and families in divers parts of the kingdom. It may be taken for granted that freedom from responsibility and cheap comforts provided afford an effective 'sweet oblivious antidote' to nostalgia."¹ Yet those who have provided these shelters and the free meals connected with them, and those who subscribe to their maintenance, have "the best intentions." The figures above quoted show how insufficient a guide to

¹ Local Government Board Report, 1906-7, p. 286.

action are even the best intentions, without a wide knowledge of causes and a vision of possible, if not probable, effects. How little discrimination is exercised by some would-be helpers of the poor was proved when a Cabinet Minister, in receipt of an income of £2000 a year, told the House of Commons¹ that, clad in a very slight disguise, he had himself asked for and obtained a free supper among "the starving and the homeless" on the Thames Embankment.

¹ Mr. Burns on January 30, 1908.

CHAPTER III

SOME PRESENT CONDITIONS

I WISH to point out yet another application of the phrase "a Vision of the Whole," and to show how essential it is that this particular application shall be practically remembered. I have already noticed that under the term "Social Work" we may legitimately consider "all kinds of work done by people with the specific intention of making the world better and happier." Now I would plead that our "Vision of the Whole" should include as many as possible of these various kinds of work; that each social worker, in whatever branch he may be working, should be quick, not only to recognise the different kinds of work being done by other workers in other branches, but that whenever possible, and as far as possible, he should make the utmost use of their labours. The success of an army engaged in a great war depends very largely on each part or unit of the army knowing what every other part is doing, and so upon each part, by means of this knowledge, whenever possible, utilising the services rendered by all the other parts. No part must discount the usefulness of any other part; and the work done by the non-combatant is often just as essential to success as the work done by the men in the firing line. The work of the men who a hundred miles in the rear are engaged in sending up ammunition and provisions, is as useful, if in a different way, as that of the men who are leading an attack.

If, then, social work embraces every effort made for the benefit of society, it will include all kinds of energy—spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical—expended for this purpose. The student who examines blue-books and reports, or who searches the records of the past,

and who studies man in every stage of development and civilisation, in order to gather facts from which, by the method of induction, he may discover and make known the laws which govern the welfare of society, may be as useful a social worker as the most assiduous visitor in the slums of some great city. The intelligent teacher, even of little children, who has a knowledge of the conditions amid which these children are living, who knows the difficulties with which they are sure to meet, and who tries to train and equip them as perfectly as possible to meet these with success, and so to become good and healthy and useful members of society, is engaged in one of the most valuable of all kinds of social work. The preacher, or the public speaker, who, with wide knowledge of the past and intimate acquaintance with the actual conditions of the present, sets before men and women the eternal laws of social welfare, and exhorts them to obey those laws, and who appeals to them to use their influence in order that their national laws or municipal by-laws may be brought into conformity with these laws, is also engaged in doing a most useful kind of social work. We must remember that the ways in which social work may be done are many; indeed, every day fresh avenues for usefulness and new opportunities for social service are being opened up. It is rather the purpose with which energy is being expended than the particular methods which are being pursued, which will justify the application of the term "Social Work."

One reason for the increased number of social workers is that undoubtedly, and entirely for good, the public conscience is becoming far more sensitive to the existence of social evils and to the inevitable results of these. Conditions which even a few years ago called forth no particular condemnation, which indeed were almost regarded as necessarily connected with the position of those who endured them, are no longer tolerated. The discovery of their existence anywhere produces to-day a widespread demand for their removal. And this demand for improved conditions of life is used not only by those

who actually suffer from evil circumstances, but by many who are troubled in conscience at the very existence of these things. In fact we may assert, and with much thankfulness, that upon the subject of social evils the public conscience is growing healthier; to foster this feeling, to sharpen this conscience still more, and to purify still further public opinion generally, is one of the most useful of all kinds of social work.

For this growing interest in social work, and for this sharpening of the public conscience, many reasons may be given. Not the least important of these is the increase of knowledge, due to the very general improvement in education, which enables men, not only to read, but to think and to reason, and to make their ideas much more widely known. Few things have had a greater or more far-reaching influence on the social problem than the enormously increased circulation of cheap newspapers which has taken place among the working classes during recent years. By means of these the opinions of one man, or of a small body of men, may in a very short time become spread over a wide area; they may appeal to an immense number of readers, and find quite an army of supporters. Where a few years ago the agitator or the social reformer spoke to a small circle of sympathisers, he now, by means of such papers as the *Clarion* or the *Labour Leader*, speaks to an audience which is numbered by hundreds of thousands.

I believe also that the wider diffusion of what may be termed Christian sentiment has had an immense influence in producing the social revolution which is undoubtedly taking place. Those who are tempted to measure the present influence of Christianity by the attendances at places of worship form, I believe, an altogether inadequate estimate of its power to-day. Not long ago an interesting contrast was drawn¹ between what may be termed organised and diffused Christianity. The latter is due, no doubt, to the efforts of the former both in the past and in the present. And certainly, I should say, the stronger and the more earnest is what we may term the Christian

¹ In a sermon by Dr. Talbot, Bishop of Southwark.

nucleus, the more widely spread and the more thoroughly penetrative will the diffused Christianity be.

Ideas are the strongest and most widely effective of all social forces, and the various increased possibilities and opportunities for the diffusion of ideas have contributed more than anything else to the rapid change in public opinion which we are witnessing at the present time. For the influencing of public opinion, in making that opinion at once healthy and intelligent, every one has a personal responsibility. But that responsibility cannot be discharged without adequate knowledge and real thoughtfulness. Social workers of all kinds are apt to forget this part of their duty. They forget that, at any rate in this country, those who are finally responsible for making and administering the laws—the laws which should make it as easy for people to do right and as hard as possible for them to do wrong—are elected by public opinion; for instance, the condition of the very poor in any neighbourhood depends in no small degree upon the local administration of the Poor Law, that is, upon the capability of the Guardians for discharging their duties. Yet many even earnest social workers never think of trying to influence public opinion at the time of the election of Guardians. They make no effort to insure that the people most suitable for the office shall be elected. While speaking of the diffusion of ideas, I must point out that to-day “news” is international. Many of the movements of thought and opinion whose results we are witnessing at home are just as strong, in some cases far stronger, in other countries than our own. We have only to read the reports of international congresses of “labour” and socialist societies to be convinced of this.

I have just spoken of certain newspapers which have a large circulation among the working classes of this country; let me strongly advise all social workers to make, if not a regular, yet an occasional study of their contents. It has frequently been remarked that one half the world does not know how the other half lives; it has also been often asserted that one reason of our social difficulties at the

present time is the growing separation, indeed the growing alienation, between class and class. In any attempt to rectify this evil condition it is surely important that each class should know what the other is thinking about, or should have a clear conception of the ideas current in it—of its aims and its aspirations. To-day very few of the working class read the contents of the sixpenny weekly journals in which the thoughts of the more educated section of the community are expressed. I fear that an equally small section of the so-called “upper classes” know the contents of the penny weeklies which circulate so largely among the working men. The portions of the contents of these latter to which I would draw special attention are the following: First, constant exposures of what are regarded (and often quite rightly so) as unjust conditions at present existing, bitter dissatisfaction with these conditions, and strongly worded denunciations of those who are supposed to be responsible for them, and in whose interest it is frequently asserted they are permitted to continue; secondly, an immense number of suggestions of all kinds—outlines of schemes of both reform and revolution—whereby these conditions might be reformed or abolished. The social worker who would work in the light of the fullest knowledge available cannot afford to be ignorant of the nature of either these denunciations or these suggestions.

The growing dissatisfaction of the workers with their lot or their circumstances cannot be wholly condemned. On the contrary, it is rather to be welcomed, and to be regarded, at least in some measure, as a cause for thankfulness. It is not only the first step towards reform, it may prove to be the most powerful of all factors towards the accomplishment of reform. Those who have much experience of work among the *very* poor know that the most hopeless cases are those who are apparently content with their present condition, or who cannot be induced to make at least some self-effort to improve it.

As an instance of this we may consider the mental condition of what is perhaps the worst paid class of workers in the kingdom—the poor women who at home earn a

miserable pittance by stitching hooks and eyes, buttons, etc., on cards, by box-making, shirt-making, and other kinds of very low-paid labour. One of the greatest difficulties in effecting any improvement in the condition of these people lies in the apparent impossibility of rousing them to exert themselves in conjunction with those who are trying to help them. They will not unite and co-operate loyally with each other in any movement for their own benefit. What such co-operation between members of a trade can accomplish is proved by the comparatively excellent position of the operatives, both men and women, in the highly organised cotton industry in Lancashire.

Among the great body of workers who are agitating for an improvement in their condition perhaps a growing sense of injustice¹ is the strongest of all the forces which is impelling them to act thus. They feel convinced, and they are asserting more and more clearly, that they are not in their wages receiving a fair proportion of the results of their labour.² Various attempts have been made, by "sliding scales" and in other ways, to adjust the wages to the profits of an industry; we can see, however, that under the present methods of the organisation of industry this is very difficult. Different firms engaged in manufacturing the same article in the same town may be making a very different percentage of profit. The larger capitalists may be able to invest in expensive machinery which the smaller capitalists cannot afford; then, again, the wealthiest firms may be able to purchase the raw material far more profitably than those which have only a small amount of ready money. Of course in the more highly organised industries the Trade Unions will not allow the men in one factory to receive several shillings a week less wages than what the men in another factory are receiving for the same labour. This, however, does not apply to all industries. Once more, very frequently, at least for a time, a firm, especially one with a large capital, may decide to continue working at an actual loss, feeling sure that a period of profit lies in the

¹ Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 9 ff.

² Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 230 ff.

near future. Are the workpeople prepared to bear a share of this loss? They could not afford to do so.

The position to-day is frequently as follows: The workpeople assert that their labour is exploited for the sole benefit of the capitalist. [I must not stay to examine this statement, which, taken in one sense, may be true, while, taken in another sense, it may be far from the whole truth.] The capitalist, in return, states that owing to the fierce competition to which he is subject, he cannot afford to give higher wages. At the same time the workman sees that the capitalists, as a body, live in far greater "style" and luxury than did their predecessors of fifty years ago. This is especially true of the larger capitalists. Undoubtedly the greater ostentation of wealth on the part of at least a section of the rich, and even on the part of some of the middle classes, who cannot really afford to make this ostentation, is having a very strong influence on the minds and feelings of the workers, who are convinced that it is through their not getting what they believe to be a fair share of the results of their labour that this wealth has been amassed.

For their own protection, and in order to obtain a stronger position from which to assert their right, we see in certain branches of industry great combinations of workmen. These are the Trade Unions which, whatever mistakes they have made, and these have in the past been many and serious, have undoubtedly been of immense service to those who have joined them. Had the workmen joined these more generally their position would have been stronger than it is; but there are a good many workmen who are either too selfish or too short-sighted to pay the weekly contribution which membership of a union demands. These unions are most successful among the most skilled workmen; and in any trade the union men are in general the best workmen and the most far-sighted. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers is a case in point. No doubt the contribution demanded for membership is high, but not in proportion either to the wages earned or to the benefit enjoyed. The Lancashire

cotton industry, to which I have already referred, is another example of how the workers by careful organisation, have been able to attain a very strong position and to enjoy a corresponding generally high level of wages. The purpose of these Trades Unions may be described as protective while trade is stationary or depressed, and as aggressive when trade is brisk or improving.

These quasi-military organisations on the part of the workers have been opposed by combinations among the capitalists, who, equally with the workers, find that union is strength, and that only in union can they meet what they often describe as the unjust, indeed impossible, demands of those they employ. Thus not only in England, but in other countries also, capital and labour stand at present opposite to each other in, as it were, two strongly fortified camps, each spending valuable energy in protecting itself against actual, or possible, aggression on the part of the other. We are, in fact, living in the midst of what has been termed "the war of the classes." It is impossible to exaggerate the evil influence of all this upon the moral life of the nation. If any one wishes to test the truth of these assertions let him mix freely first, among bodies of workmen discussing their position and their wrongs, let him then mix among a body of employers, and he will find that usually the iniquities of one class will be the chief topic of the other's conversation. The present condition has been thus very clearly described: "Trade has all the spirit and some of the forms of war . . . trade is still the counterpart of war, in its merciless dealing with opponents, its indifference to the welfare of non-combatants, and its calculated sacrifice of the rank and file of its armies in the cause of ultimate success. Its methods can only be described in metaphors of battlefield and siege; for it is essentially a truceless fight for what both sides desire and only one side can possess."¹

I must leave to another chapter some further reasons for insisting upon the social worker making every effort to acquire, and in all his work to keep in mind, this "Vision of the Whole."

¹ Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, pp. 76, 77.

CHAPTER IV

SOME ISSUES OF COMPETITION

I HAVE begun this book by trying to describe the broad features of the special conditions of the present time. Possibly to some of my readers I may seem to have given undue prominence to them, to have laid more than sufficient stress upon the need of understanding them. Is not human nature, they will ask, very much the same in all ages and under all conditions? To this question the answer must be both "yes" and "no." Let me explain. Every social worker of any experience will admit the necessity of taking at least some account of the surroundings of the people we wish to help. Indeed social workers might be roughly divided into two classes—those who address their efforts mainly to the improvement of the people, and those who direct their endeavours chiefly to altering their circumstances. The first would be those who are said to lay most stress upon moral and spiritual influences; the second those who trust chiefly to the alteration or reform of conditions, whether brought about by legislative action or by some other means. But those who speak thus make a dangerous assumption, one unwarranted by the facts, viz. that you can separate, even in thought, people from their circumstances. To speak quite accurately, we may say that at every moment of their existence people are being affected by their circumstances and their circumstances are being affected by themselves—in other words, our circumstances are constantly becoming a part of ourselves and we are becoming a part of our circumstances. This is one reason why we find it so extremely difficult to understand thoroughly those who have been

brought up, and who are still, in circumstances so different from our own.

Every earnest social worker will admit the need of being a careful student of human nature. In this study the fact upon which I have just laid stress is an axiom. The moment it is forgotten we shall go wrong. But another fact must also be remembered, viz. the younger we are the more strongly do our circumstances affect us; the older we are the more likely are we to affect our circumstances. We speak of children being so "impressionable," and of our being able to make "such a small impression" upon those who have arrived at least at middle life. In impressions, as in food, the child proportionately takes in far more than the adult. The reason for this, as far as food is concerned, is clear: the child has to grow as well as to make up for waste; the adult has only to do this last. The child is also continually stocking his mind, and so *forming* his character and causing this to develop by taking in many new ideas. On the other hand, it is notorious how difficult it is for some adults to assimilate any new ideas: as we say, their character is "formed"; it seems to be incapable of development.

I must not further enlarge upon this analogy except to notice that what we term "the difference in human nature" appears to lie in the different degree in which different children (or adults) are quick to receive or assimilate impressions and also to retain these. This intrinsic difference in "natures" will account for many of the phenomena we meet with in the study of human character, e.g. various degrees of quickness of apprehension or comprehension, also various powers of memory. Neither the powers of comprehension nor of memory can be said to depend altogether on education or training, though by these they may be developed and improved.

These thoughts form only another argument for my plea for a "Vision of the Whole." In dealing with an individual, a family, a class, even a neighbourhood, we must consider these *with* their circumstances and their history, so far as these can be learnt. This history is

often the key to both the character and the surroundings. Yet comparatively few social workers seem to see the necessity of trying to trace the *history* of a case which they are trying to help. I use the word "case" here very broadly; it may mean either an individual or a family, or even a class of persons. To trace the history is to discover the causes of the present condition; and, of course, where these causes are inimical to welfare, we must try to eradicate them.

Here is one more example of the need of a "Vision of the Whole." Four of the greatest evils against which the social worker has to struggle are poverty, drunkenness, betting and gambling, and the apparently increasing alienation of the very poor from religious influences. How very rarely do we find one of these evils existing by itself! Much more frequently we find two or three of them existing together. Sometimes we find individuals and families, indeed almost whole neighbourhoods, the victims of all four at the same time. Then each of the four is often both the cause and the result of one or more of the others. We know how easily people in a low state of physical health are attacked by a "complication" of diseases; so people in a low state of moral health, and the victims of one moral evil, are specially liable to be attacked by another. [The frequent combination of drink and impurity is known to every worker of experience.] Very frequently all the four evils I have named are, at least indirectly, the results of the present fierce competition and of the existing warfare between capital and labour, which, all will agree, is an unhealthy social condition. In the last chapter I showed how the organised workmen seem to be entrenched in one armed camp and the masters in another. The workmen through their union demand a minimum wage. The master is in the grip of a system of "cutting of prices" between firm and firm; he therefore adopts every means of lessening his wages-bill. Wherever he is able he introduces machinery (which often can be watched or tended by boys or girls) instead of paying men a man's wage. Where

he retains men he "speeds up" his machinery, and, through his foremen, he demands that the output of the men shall be largely increased. Here two results follow: first, by the substitution of boy and girl labour, thousands of adult workers are thrown out of employment; secondly, by the speeding up of the machinery, the work required of the men who remain becomes excessively arduous—too arduous for either physical or mental health. One result of the father of the family being thrown out of work is at least a measure of poverty in the home; for ten shillings a week brought in by a boy of sixteen is a poor substitute for the loss of twenty-five to thirty shillings a week through the father being thrown out of work. He, through force of habit, for every attempt he has made for months to obtain regular employment has failed, gradually becomes content to pick up an odd job here and there. This means whole days of enforced idleness during which the temptation to hang about the public-house or the working-men's club becomes irresistible, and so he contracts habits of drunkenness. But there is another result. He now regards the master who has driven him from his work as more than ever his enemy. But this master probably attends some place of worship. The workman mentally associates religion with capitalism, and becomes possibly the foe of it, almost certainly indifferent to it. So in this case poverty, drink, and alienation from religion are all at least indirectly the result of our fiercely competitive system.

I will take another example. We saw that, instead of meeting the demand for a minimum wage by substituting boy and girl labour for men's labour, the master may meet it by putting in machinery that goes at an immense rate of speed, and consequently puts a very great physical and mental strain on the men who watch, or "follow," it. [I am thinking of such machinery as is now used in a modern boot and shoe factory.] The master says to himself, If the men demand a high wage, say thirty shillings a week, they must earn it. The work must be done with great rapidity, indeed at such a pace that only the strong man can do it,

and even he can do it only for a few years. At the end of that time, generally before he is fifty, he is "used up"; he is then discharged and a younger man takes his place.

During these years of hard toil he comes out of the factory at 6.30 or 7 p.m. exhausted in body and mind. For ten hours he has probably been incessantly performing a single mechanical operation. Nature has a habit of asserting herself or, if wrongly used, of avenging herself. This man's nature now craves for some excitement, for something that will drive out of his mind the effects of the labour of the day. The public-house is close at hand; the betting agent is on the watch for him. He drinks and he bets, and with the inevitable result of poverty for his wife and children. A man can hardly "mix up" religion with habits like these. He never enters a place of worship; indeed "God is not in all his thoughts." Here we find all the four evils together. The poverty is the result of the drink and the gambling; these, as I have just shown, are the result of a man being reduced to a state of physical and mental exhaustion. The opportunity for developing the best and highest part of his nature has, from force of circumstances, been denied this man. The best part of his nature has been taken from him, and so he becomes the slave and victim of the lowest part. I speak from experience of work amongst these men when I say that, after a day of ten hours in the factory, the great majority of them are too tired to enter heartily into any work having for its object their mental and moral improvement.

In giving these various instances of the interdependence of social evils I am still pleading for the "Vision of the Whole." The want of the power to grasp and retain this vision is everywhere apparent in the efforts which are being made to grapple with these evils. The temperance worker sees the evil of drunkenness and he has made strenuous attempts for many years past to close public-houses or to restrict the hours in which alcoholic liquors may be purchased. But he finds that while public-houses are being closed, clubs are everywhere being opened; he finds also that there is considerable evidence to show that drinking among women,

especially in small parties in private houses, is increasing. We must admire his object, we must wish him success, and we have every desire to help him to achieve his purpose ; but we cannot help suspecting from his failure to see "the Whole" that he is attacking a symptom, rather than eradicating the source of the disease. Those who are fighting manfully against the rapid increase in betting and gambling are doing an excellent work ; but here again we suspect that they are rather driving the evil below the surface and out of sight instead of abolishing its cause. The kindly souls who supply money or groceries or coals or clothing, and the spiritual teachers who from door to door are pleading with the very poor to think of higher things, are both doing their best, the one to mitigate physical suffering, the other to bring light into dark places ; but both combined make little impression on the colossal mass of poverty and irreligion which exists in the slums of every large town. Occasional gifts are a poor substitute for regular wages, and religious appeals have little effect on men and women who never think about religion, or if they do think of it are apt to connect it with the professions of those whom they regard as their enemies and oppressors. Their "circumstances"—in the most comprehensive meaning of the term—have done much to make the men and women, whose characters and conditions we alike deplore, what they are, and now their characters are affecting their circumstances. The "Vision of the Whole" reveals a vicious circle where evil causes are producing evil effects, which in turn again become sources of evil.

If men and women are compelled, "by force of circumstances," to live the life of either beasts of burden or beasts of prey, sooner or later the animal nature in both becomes supreme. We cannot with impunity neglect, or allow others to compel us to neglect, any part of the whole of human nature. Either to neglect or to deny the opportunity for the development of the higher faculties inevitably entails the ruin of the whole.

In face of the facts with which we are surrounded and to which we cannot, if we would, shut our eyes, it is im-

possible to deny that to-day large numbers of people are living a life (?) which can only be compared to that of beasts of burden. It appears to be equally impossible to deny that a certain number of men seem to be growing rich by "preying" upon others. Recently the word "parasitic" has been employed to describe a certain condition of industry¹ which is widespread at the present time, and it has been asserted that this condition is not only parasitic with regard to individuals, but that it is eating out the life of the State or the community. Another, and I fear all too common, instance of this parasitism was very clearly brought out in the *Report of the Committee on Home Work*, where more than one witness² declared that it was owing to their being in receipt either of private charity or of out-relief that "sweated" workers were able to accept the miserable wages for which some of them work. Surely the word *parasitic* is the right word to describe the position, or action, of those who grow rich by employing such workers at such wages.

It must be the aim of every social worker to secure such "social" conditions — and here "social" will include physical, educational, economic, and religious—that every man, woman, and child shall have at least the possibility, the opportunity, of living a truly human life.

We cannot aim at less than this. Certainly the *Christian* worker cannot. And by "human" I mean what we believe God intended man to be, man as we conceive him created by God in His own image, man also redeemed by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Against everything which prevents men and women and children becoming what the Christian doctrine of man assumes, the *Christian* social worker is bound by his profession to strive. We must remember the words "all which prevents." To use the phrase once more, we must remember, "the Vision of the Whole." This "all which prevents" will include much in man's nature; it will also include much in man's circumstances; it will include even

¹ e.g. M. F. Sadler, *Continuation Schools in England, &c.*, p. xiii.

² e.g. Questions 600, 623, 788, 982, &c. &c.

something in the present constitution of society. For it can hardly be maintained that, under present conditions, society is so organised that the fullest possible opportunity is given to all—even if they do all that lies within them—to become what man or woman should be.

How difficult the circumstances of many are, how these circumstances are affecting them for evil, and how, in turn, they are affecting for evil these circumstances is not realised even by all social workers. To make this more clear I shall in the next nine chapters consider at length a concrete case. I shall put before my readers a detailed study of a typical family—a “social unit”—one which I believe to be representative of thousands of families existing, not “living,” in our great towns to-day.

The study of a concrete example will exhibit more clearly than any other method the difficulties with which the social worker has to contend, and will show more clearly than any other means how these difficulties have arisen. It will also, I hope, indicate to us at least some of the immediate objects which the social worker must strive to accomplish.

CHAPTER V

THE FATHER

JOHN SMITH is the tenant of No. 43 March Street, Wefton, a manufacturing town with between 150,000 and 200,000 inhabitants. March Street consists of 120 small red brick cottages, each of which is exactly like all the others. There are 60 houses on each side built in blocks of 20. Between each block of 20 there is a narrow passage leading into an equally narrow passage between two high walls. Behind these high walls on either side lie a row of small back-yards. For parallel to March Street, and identically like it, lie several other streets. One end of March Street opens into the London Road, one of the chief thoroughfares of the town. If we cross this we find ourselves in a street exactly like the one we have left. At the four corners, where these two streets cross, stand two public-houses—the “Dog and Partridge” and the “Rising Sun”—belonging to two rival brewery companies, and two “general” shops. Only a few yards down the main road is an entry into a quiet court; in this court is a “Working Men’s Club,” of somewhat evil reputation among those who are trying to improve the general tone and character of the neighbourhood. While opposite to this entry, and also in the main road, stands a somewhat gaudily painted building, along the front of which runs a large signboard with the inscription, “Palace Theatre of Varieties: Two Performances every Evening.”

We will return to No. 43 March Street, and make a somewhat detailed examination of this particular tenement. Like the rest of the houses in the neighbourhood it has evidently been very cheaply built. Some thirty or forty

years ago, when the rate of increase of the population was more rapid than to-day, a considerable amount of land, then on the outskirts of the town, came into the market. This was purchased by a syndicate, who financed a "jerry" builder to put upon it as many cottage houses as possible. As soon as these were tenanted, they were sold in small lots to various people, mostly to those who had saved a little money and were glad to find an investment which, apparently, would yield about seven per cent. Many of the purchasers sunk the whole of their savings in this way. Since then both the neighbourhood and the property have steadily deteriorated, while rates and the demands of the sanitary authority have steadily risen. At one time these houses were occupied by a class of tenants somewhat superior to those who now inhabit them; but most of these have migrated to better cottages on the present outskirts of the town. Originally the houses in March Street were 5s. 6d. a week, now the rent is 5s. "clear," that is, including rates and taxes of all kinds, which the owners pay. As rates have more than doubled in the last twenty years, and as, owing to the very poor materials of which the houses were built, repairs are constantly needed, the annual return to the owners is now far less than it originally was.

Each house consists of a living room some sixteen feet square, entered directly from the street; behind this is a scullery. At the back of the living room, a narrow staircase leads to two bedrooms on the first floor, one over the living room and one over the scullery; above the former of these there is, again, an attic.

The present inmates of No. 43 are as follows: John Smith, aged 45; Martha, his wife, who is two years younger; and their living children, viz. George, who is 20; Clara, 19; Lucy, 16; Fred, who is 11, and Mabel, who is 8. Besides these there is Mrs. Smith's mother, Sarah Thompson, aged 72.

We will enter the living room about half-past three o'clock on a February afternoon. The door is open, otherwise the room would be very dark, for the window is

somewhat small, and the dirty once-white curtains in front of it impede the light. The room is extremely untidy. On a round table in the centre is a heap of half-made garments, to each of which Mrs. Smith, who is one of the out-workers at a clothing-factory, "does something" in quick succession. On a couch by the window lies Lucy, the girl of sixteen. A glance from a practised eye is enough to see that she is well advanced in the earlier stages of consumption. On a chair by her side lie more of the same kind of garments, to which she is doing the same thing as her mother, though much more slowly. On another chair by the door is a big bundle of these garments ready to go back to the factory as soon as the boy of eleven returns from school. At the opposite side of the table from Mrs. Smith stands the old woman of seventy-two, getting ready the tea, which is to consist of some slices of white bread and margarine, with a relish of tinned salmon. The remains of the salmon are still in the tin, though it has been open at least two days. The "tea" has been brewing for at least a quarter of an hour in a tin teapot, which stands on the hob. In a teacup, without a handle, is about a quarter of a pint of milk of very poor quality. To complete the picture of this "living" room I may add that the floor is very dirty, the walls are in extreme need of a new and clean paper, and the hearth has apparently not been swept since the fire was lighted in the morning.

At this moment a very kindly mannered district visitor knocks at the open door and then steps in. She stands for a few moments beside Lucy's couch, tells her how very sorry she is to see her looking so ill, and how she hopes her cough is no worse, and then gives her a "milk-ticket"—an order for "one pint of milk daily for the next fortnight." She then turns to Mrs. Smith and says how sorry she is never to see her either at the Mothers' Meeting on a Tuesday, or at Church on Sunday. To this Mrs. Smith replies that she is too busy to get out on a week-day, and too tired on a Sunday. [Both these statements are absolutely true.] The visitor next asks after the

old woman's rheumatism, bids them good afternoon, and departs.

The foregoing picture is a correct description of what, with a few alterations in detail, can be seen in thousands of so-called "homes" in the poorer parts of our large industrial towns. In the course of twenty-five years' experience as a parochial clergyman I have visited hundreds of such cases. I have as far as possible drawn an average case, not one of exceptional poverty, nor exceptional wickedness, nor exceptional suffering. I have described a single scene in the daily life of some poor people. I have tried to picture things exactly as they are. Now, with as brief comments as possible, I wish to try to trace how they have come to be so.

Until about three years ago John Smith, the father, had worked regularly in various factories in the town. He had been a steady man, but was neither a quick nor intelligent worker. Of late years the speed of the machinery had been increased, and Smith found it difficult to keep pace with his work. About three years ago trade became slack, and, in consequence, the firm for which he worked reduced the number of "hands" they employed. The least efficient men were weeded out, Smith being among these. For many weeks after that he sought diligently for work, both in Wefton and in the neighbourhood, but without success. When, after a few months, trade revived, he increased his efforts to find employment, but in every case where he applied he found that youths at ten to twelve shillings a week had been set to work the kind of machine for "minding" which he had received twenty-six shillings. For some time he earned a few shillings a week by doing odd jobs, and for about three months during each winter he had received ten shillings a week for four days' work with the "unemployed." Now, for some months, he had earned practically nothing. Through enforced idleness his character had rapidly deteriorated. Recently he had given way to drink, and what money he now earned by odd jobs, or could coax or bully out of his wife, was spent in this way. On the afternoon of our visit to his home he had

earned a shilling by putting in some coals ; that money he was now drinking in the " Rising Sun."

John Smith is an example of a problem which to-day constantly meets the social worker or reformer—the almost inevitable deterioration of character through enforced unemployment. Upon a first view of the unemployed and their rapid deterioration we are strongly inclined to agree with those who advocate the " right to work." But in this experience, strengthened by history, is against us. The " law of least resistance " seems to pervade the universe, and the knowledge that the State, or the Municipality, must ultimately find work for the workless, acts as a terribly strong deterrent upon individual self-effort. It seems to prevent all but the finest characters putting forth their best efforts. On the other hand, the costliness of labour colonies is constantly urged. We are told that such institutions are never self-supporting, but are inevitably a heavy burden upon the ratepayer. But those who argue thus forget that the properly managed labour colony does far more than merely find work—it prevents the moral deterioration of the workless ; it should do even more, it should improve their characters, and in very many cases it should convert the unemployable into the useful worker. The moral character of even the poorest of its members is an important consideration for any community. We spend public money freely—though not too freely—on elementary education, because we believe that children intelligently taught and well trained are a valuable asset to the State, and that to insure this asset a considerable investment of public funds at the cost of the citizens is wise. May not money carefully spent in preventing the deterioration of the characters of adults, and in trying to fit those who are unemployable in the town for work on the land, be also a wise investment of public money ? If the cost of a farm colony be, say, £2000 a year, and the return from the sale of its produce be only £1500, is the verdict, " It is a loss to the citizens of £500 a year," a complete account of the result of such an experiment ? Personally, I should answer most emphati-

cally "No." By the expenditure of this £500, many men may have been prevented from applying to the Poor Law, and "once a pauper always a pauper;" some may have been saved from degradation, if not from crime; even if only a few are enabled to become useful, self-supporting workers the money has been well spent. Of course, very much will depend on the management of the colony, upon suitable soil, upon efficient overseers and instruction, upon a wise choice of the men who shall enter it, and upon the length of time they are retained in it. Those who have watched carefully "the unemployed at work" are often struck with the very inefficient supervision exercised over them; the nature of the work chosen is often unsuitable to the men who are doing it; and also the period for which they are employed is generally far too short to have any really beneficial effect either upon the men or upon their methods of working.

The whole question of "unemployment" is at the present time perhaps the most difficult of all the questions which meet the social worker. To say that the majority of the unemployed are unemployable is probably not true, though to say that perhaps 90 per cent. are unskilled workmen, or workers of less than average capacity and industry, is probably only too true. We must inquire why they are unskilled, and if they are unemployable, how they have become so.

The following factors in the problem are not always remembered. The public demands a cheap article, say cheap boots; this means machine-made boots. By machinery, with the help of boys, girls, and women, a very much smaller number of men can produce the same or a much greater number of boots. Thus, as the result of the same immediate cause—the introduction of machinery—the public gets its boots cheaper, and a large number of men, through no fault of their own, are thrown out of work. What is true of this particular trade is true of others. Here arises a question: Have the men who are thrown out of work as the result of a change by which the general

public benefits any moral claim on the public? Some would go so far as to assert they have actually an economic, or monetary, claim.

The remedies for unemployment which have been suggested are too many for me to discuss at length. What I have to say upon them must be deferred to another chapter.¹

¹ See chapter viii.

CHAPTER VI

THE MOTHER

WHEN the father lost his employment the family income at once became less by nearly a pound a week. His wages had been nominally 26s. per week, but this sum implied a full week's work. Frequently, however, he was on short time; then he would only earn from 16s. to 18s. in the week. As I have said, he had been a steady man, and he rarely kept back more than 2s. a week for his own "spending money." So that on an average throughout the year Mrs. Smith might look for about 20s. a week from her husband.

She, as is so often the case with the wife among the poor, managed the finances of the household. What was coming into the house apart from her husband's wages would not keep the family. Let us see what this was when he fell out of work. George, the eldest son, then seventeen years old, earned as a general hand in a warehouse 13s. a week, of which he gave his mother 10s.; Clara, the eldest girl, then aged sixteen, worked in a pinafore factory, where she earned 6s. a week, of which she gave her mother 5s. 6d. The other children were at school. The old grandmother received 4s. 6d. a week out-relief from the parish, all of which she gave her daughter. Hence Mrs. Smith's income for providing rent, fire and light, and food, for eight persons—four of whom might be regarded as adults—was just £1 a week. But she must provide also clothing for all except her mother (who generally had hers given to her by charitable people) and the eldest boy, who paid for his own out of the 3s. a week which he retained. Besides, she must also provide those absolute necessities without

which even the poorest house cannot well exist : something must be allowed for cleaning, and wear and tear.

The task, of course, was a hopeless one. It could not be done. With the utmost possible thrift, by the exercise of the greatest skill in buying and carefulness in use, it might have been possible to provide just sufficient food and to pay the rent out of 20s. a week, but even this is very doubtful.¹ But it would have been impossible, even with these conditions strictly fulfilled, to pay for coal, light, soap, and even repairs of clothing. But Mrs. Smith knew little or nothing of either skill in purchasing or economy in use. Like the great majority of women in the same position she had never learnt, because she had never been taught, even the elements of proper household management. She knew little or nothing either about the nutritive properties of food or how to cook it. She knew equally little how to care for the health of young children ; in consequence, five out of the ten she had borne had died in infancy.

Let us review very briefly the life of this woman, and while we are doing this we are reviewing the lives of tens of thousands of the same class. Until she was thirteen she had attended an elementary school. There, beyond learning to read, to write, to do very simple sums, and gaining a very hazy outline of the "Gospel Story," with its more obvious lessons, she had learnt nothing that was of any use to her in after life. At thirteen she had gone to the same factory in which her husband was employed, and there she worked on after her marriage till her first child was born. This and the next child only lived a few days ; in each case, as soon as she was able, she went back to the factory, where she continued to work until her eldest living child came. After that, as her husband was then earning fair wages, she remained at home and began to pick up, often at the cost of painful experience, what little knowledge she possessed of the things which every wife and mother ought to know.

¹ The "Family Budgets" in Mr. Rowntree's *Poverty: a Study of Town Life*, pp. 393 ff., are instructive.

The education of girls in our elementary schools is probably somewhat better to-day than it was thirty years ago, but it is still terribly deficient on the practical side, and will continue to be so until the age of compulsory attendance is raised to fifteen, with at least four hours a week compulsory attendance at continuation classes for all, except domestic servants, until the age of eighteen; and until two out of these four hours are devoted to learning, from really qualified teachers, household management and the care of health. To bring these conditions about, and to see that those compulsory continuation classes are held in the daytime and not in the evening, should be one of the chief aims of the social worker. I know I shall be told that the cost of such a scheme to the nation, and the loss of wages it would mean to the poor, render it impossible. My answer to the first objection is that, in the improvement which would accrue to the national health and physique, the extra cost would be amply repaid: and to the second, that at present the employers of boy and girl labour are probably getting far more profit from that labour than even they themselves realise,¹ and if they do not get the profit, the nation—that is, the general consumer—is receiving it, by obtaining goods for which an inadequate price in wages has been paid. If the boys and girls who work eight, nine, and ten hours a day were, until they were eighteen, compelled to spend four of these hours every week at a continuation school, I believe the employer would have to give the same wages as he gives now, even if he had to charge a little more for the goods he produces. At present cheap boy and girl labour is committing us to a vicious circle of evils. It is unskilled, and it remains unskilled, labour: for the boys it often means uncertain employment or want of employment in the early years of manhood with almost certainly total unemployment later on; for the girls it means ignorance and inefficiency in the chief duties of womanhood. It means in both cases national

¹ Sadler. *Continuation Schools*, &c., p. xiii.

loss; and through the Poor Law or in other ways, it means an increase to the burdens of the nation. From all these evils we are now actually suffering, and, unless a change can be effected, we shall suffer still more from them in the future. And why? except that employers may obtain a constant supply of cheap labour, and that, through the fierceness of competition, the public may obtain goods at less than a *fair* cost price, at any rate so far as the wages bill is concerned.

We return to Mrs. Smith with her problem of how to keep a house and eight people on 20s. a week. What was she to do? Actually she did two things. First, for the second girl, Lucy, then twelve years old, she got a place "morning and evening and on Saturdays." The girl went "to do anything that was wanted", for some people who kept a small shop; she worked from 7 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. each morning, and from 5.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. each evening, and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. until sometimes nearly 10 p.m. For this she received half-a-crown a week and "some bits of food." The second thing Mrs. Smith did was to apply to a woman in the neighbourhood who took "out-work" from a clothing factory, and then divided¹ this up among a number of other women, to whom she paid somewhat less than she received. Very little skill, "when once you got the knack," was required: the pay, of course, was extremely low—averaging about 1¼d. an hour, but by it Mrs. Smith managed to earn something like 6s. to 8s. a week; for the earnings varied with the amount of work which she could obtain. With these two additional sources of income, the money at Mrs. Smith's disposal rose to nearly 30s. a week. But at what cost, and with what results?

First, the cost to the girl Lucy. She was not a strong child. Five and a-half hours in school on five days in the week was quite enough tax upon her strength, even if she had had much care and good food at home. But in addition to the time she was in school, she worked nearly forty

¹ *Report on Home Work.* Questions 1013 ff.

hours a week, and much of the work she did was heavy. Carrying coals, or a heavy baby, scrubbing floors, and cleaning yards and steps, are all severe strains upon the strength of a growing girl of twelve. But at this work she continued for nearly twelve months, that is, until the day of her exemption from attendance at school arrived, when, like her mother before her, she went into a factory. She had not been there many months before serious signs of phthisical trouble began to show themselves. A few weeks later she had to leave the factory; since then, when she was well enough, she had been helping her mother with the clothing work at home. Lucy's present condition was, said the doctor, largely due to overtaxed strength and insufficient nourishment. Upon a constitution weakened by these two causes the seeds of consumption had fastened themselves. How long she would live was doubtful.

Secondly, let us consider the cost to the community through the out-relief received by Mrs. Smith's old mother. For her age she was fairly strong and active. She was country-born, and had not come into the town until she was about twenty, when she brought with her a good stock of vitality. She lost her husband early, who left her with five small children to bring up as well as she could. She could not maintain these, and so was obliged "to apply to the parish" to supplement the small earnings she made by washing and cleaning; and this parish pay continued until her children were able to do something towards their own support. They were now all married, and she had lived first with one and then with another. For the last six years she had lived with the Smiths, and during the whole of this time she had been in receipt of out-relief, though two of her sons were well able, had they been compelled, to do something towards their mother's maintenance. But in Weston, as in so many other Unions, Guardians were loath to make such an order, and the magistrates were still less anxious to have to enforce it.

Here I might enter upon that difficult subject of the Poor Law, and upon its many intricate problems, and especially upon that much disputed one, the granting of

out-relief. But, except for trying to show its effects upon such a case as the one before us, I must refrain.

This old woman received from the rates, that is, from the community, 4s. 6d. a week. This was probably 1s. 6d. or 2s. less than she could, with care, have maintained herself upon. She probably cost the Smiths for food and lodging (for she had not a room to herself) 3s. 6d. a week; hence she was worth to them 1s. a week in addition to her services—she now did practically almost all the housework—which they got for nothing. Thus the sum of these two items, her services *plus* 1s. a week, may be regarded as a present to the Smiths from the community. Then, it was because this old woman did the housework that Mrs. Smith could take in badly paid work. So, in fact, at least indirectly, through the out-relief received by this old woman, Mrs. Smith and her daughter were the victims of “sweated” labour. For, to the wages which they received ought to be added the value of the old woman’s services and 1s. a week. The sum of these was really paid by the community to the manufacturer of these goods, or perhaps, ultimately to those who purchased them at less than a fair cost price.

The above is only an example of what those who know the effect of the Poor Law are constantly maintaining, and with a large amount of truth, viz. that almost always the effect of out-relief is to depress wages.¹

¹ A few of the more intelligent of the working class are beginning to see this; but the average Guardian is still blind to it. The hopeless ignorance of the average Guardian in regard to the laws and conditions of social welfare is, however, too fruitful a subject for a small book like this.

CHAPTER VII

THE SICK POOR

LET us next turn our attention to the sick girl Lucy, now sixteen years of age. To consider her case suggests the whole problem of the *sick poor*. Lucy was suffering from consumption; the cause of the disease, as we saw, being infection fastening itself upon a constitution enfeebled by overwork and insufficient food. Had Lucy's case been properly treated at the inception of the disease; had she been able to go to a sanatorium, to live in the open air, and to obtain an ample supply of the most suitable nourishment, she certainly might have thrown off the complaint and eventually have become strong.

But all these advantages were far out of the reach of Lucy Smith. She continued to work at the factory as long as ever she was able. The atmosphere there was probably as wholesome as could be expected, but it was certainly not a suitable one for a young girl with consumption. The atmosphere of the home was no better. She, her elder sister, and the old woman shared the attic at the top of the house. The room was neither small nor low, and it probably contained some 1600 cubic feet of breathing space; but the grandmother "felt the cold," and strongly objected to an open window. Her ideas of fresh air were those of a former generation. Then the food with which Lucy was supplied was very different, both in quality and quantity, from what she needed. She had been seen very occasionally by a doctor, who had a "dispensary," of which, while the father was in work, the Smiths had been members. But though some months had passed since they had paid any subscription, the doctor, out of sheer kindness of heart,

continued to pay her a visit when he happened to be in the street. What could he do? He could order milk and cod-liver oil, and he had actually *given* her more than one bottle; for the Smiths could not afford to buy it. The mother had tried to get her an order for a sanatorium, the district visitor and the doctor had also tried, but in vain. The answer from every subscriber to such an institution was the same, "they had only one or two orders, and these had been already given away."

In this country the number of sanatoria is slowly growing, but the accommodation is as yet utterly inadequate to the need. In Germany, through the workmen's insurance companies, who have learnt the economic value of sanatoria, the number is far greater. It has been computed that in Germany in four years 70,000 patients passed through these institutions, and of this large number more than 75 per cent. have been so much benefited as to be classed as "economic cures." In our own country we have not yet fully realised the value of these institutions. The cost of their erection and maintenance has so far proved an obstacle to their multiplication; very largely because people have not clearly realised their economic value. No doubt when it is more widely understood how many years of working power, that is of wage-earning opportunity, a prolonged stay in a sanatorium, at the beginning of the disease, may add to the lives of those threatened with consumption, we shall follow the example of Germany. Unfortunately very few people will take the trouble to learn by an arithmetical calculation—by comparing the loss of wages incurred by the working classes with the cost of sanatoria—how much would be saved if those attacked by consumption could at once be taken there. Certainly, owing to better housing conditions and to the slowly growing knowledge of hygienics among the poor, there is already far less consumption than there was. But with the means of combating the disease in its earliest stage at once available, not only the death-rate from it, but the loss and suffering, to say nothing of the chances of infection, might be greatly reduced. To make the ad-

vantages of sanatoria more widely known, to educate public opinion as to their usefulness, to point out their economic value both to Friendly Societies and to Municipal Corporations is one of the best works which the social reformer can do at the present time.

Those who know intimately the life of the very poor know that it is in sickness more than perhaps at any other time that their helplessness is seen. Frequent or long-continued illness in the home often taxes severely the resources of those comparatively well-to-do. What must it necessarily mean to those who, at the best of times, can with difficulty "make both ends meet"? And we must remember that it frequently comes to these just when they are least able to bear the strain. Sickness may come at any time, but it is more likely to attack those who are badly housed, poorly fed, and scantily clothed. A proof of this may easily be obtained by comparing the death-rates in the poorest and the well-to-do districts of any of our largest towns. Not infrequently the one is half as high again as the other. The following is an all too common experience. During a time when work has been fairly good and wages regular the father of a family has been a member of some Friendly Society, and his wife and children also members of a dispensary. The man falls out of work, after a time he can no longer pay into his society, nor can the weekly or monthly payments to the dispensary be met. The whole family falls "out of benefit." Then sickness comes into the home. This is just the time when sick pay, free medical attendance, and medicine are most needed.

Some years ago when, during a period of exceptional distress, I was working on a relief committee, I got a resolution passed that the first inquiry to be addressed to all applicants should be as to what provision they had attempted to make against sickness, and as to how they stood in regard to this; in other words, were they members of any Friendly Society, club, or dispensary, and had they dropped, or were they likely to drop, out of benefit. The resolution to which I have just referred also stated that as

far as possible the first help we gave them should be to restore them to, and keep them in, a position in which, should they fall ill, they might claim the help for which they had possibly for years subscribed.

We cannot too strongly impress upon the poor the value of their becoming members of one of the greater Friendly Societies, or at least of a respectable dispensary, both of these being measures of self-protection against the expense entailed by sickness; and it must be remembered that now the best Friendly Societies have branches for both women and children.¹ Unfortunately at the present time young men do not seem to be joining these societies as they did some years ago. Several reasons may be given for this, but probably the chief one is the competition of "Sick and Dividend" or "Loan and Dividend" societies which have become so popular during the last few years. To those who look for "quick returns" these offer certain attractions; though, compared with those of the older Friendly Societies, the benefits conferred by these are largely illusory, especially as a provision against long-continued sickness.

The subscription to one of the older well-established Friendly Societies paid by an adult member varies according to the age at which the member entered, but half-a-crown a month may be regarded as about the average; this sum will cover the contributions to the sick, funeral, management, and distress funds. The amount of sick pay varies slightly in the different societies, but on the average about 12s. a week for six months, and 6s. a week for the next six months, and, should the case become chronic, probably 3s. a week after that might be considered a usual allowance.²

The "Sick and Dividend" clubs are worked quite differently from the Friendly Societies, and, unfortunately, are generally connected with public-houses, for which they may be regarded as advertisements, or as means of attracting customers. These are "Yearly," or "Dividing-up" societies. The plan on which they are usually worked is

¹ *e.g.* the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, and the Foresters.

² For women, for the same subscription, the rate of sick pay is less. For children, both payments and rate of sick pay are less.

as follows: Each member, male or female, pays an entrance fee of 6d. and a weekly subscription of 6d. for "senior" members, that is, from the age of eighteen to say forty-five or fifty; whereas junior members (from fourteen to eighteen) pay 3d. per week. In case of sickness seniors receive 12s. a week for four weeks, 8s. for another four weeks, and 4s. for a third four weeks; while "junior" members receive half these amounts for the same periods. The "club" starts new each first week in January, and the weekly payments are continued until the week before Christmas, when the funds remaining in the club are "divided up" among the members. In some clubs a member may have two or even three shares, so his sick pay may actually be 24s. or even 36s. a week for the first month. [In connection with these clubs there are no advantages in regard to medical attendance or medicine as is the case with the Friendly Societies.] In these clubs as in the Friendly Societies no member having had his full term of full sick pay may again claim that pay within the next twelve months, or in the course of the current year. The chief attractions of the "Dividing-up" society are two: First, the Christmas "sharing out," and, secondly, the usually much more lenient medical examination (if there is any at all) which a member has to undergo before he is admitted. The disadvantages of the "Dividing-up" society are, of course, patent to any one who will take the trouble to think. Among these may be mentioned, first, the weekly visit to the public-house to pay the subscription. It will easily be seen that in this way a habit of going to the public-house is formed or encouraged, and also that this visit will rarely be made without having at least one glass while there, and very frequently the one glass will be followed by a second and a third. Thus the cost of the subscription to the member, instead of being 6d. a week, may easily become 9d. or 1s. Secondly, the term of sick benefit is extremely short, when compared with that of the Friendly Society. In a case of long-continued sickness, 12s. for a month is a very poor substitute for 12s. for six months, and 6s. for another six months. Thirdly, the advantage of the

Christmas "draw" is, unless people are very careful, apt to be a very doubtful one. Suppose that for each share the Christmas dividend is from 12s. to 15s., how much of this money will be saved or wisely spent? Those who have experience of these clubs, and who know the life of those who join them, know that a great deal of this money finds its way back to the public-house, while not a little of it is spent in extravagant eating and drinking at Christmas time. If I were asked for a proof that there is an immense amount of thoughtlessness among the working class, and a very general tendency to take extremely short views, I should instance the great, and, I fear, growing popularity of the "Dividing-up" societies. In one public-house in a low part of the town in which I am writing, much more than a thousand pounds was last Christmas "shared out" among the members of a single "Sick and Dividend" society.

Another method of providing against the inevitable expenses of sickness by the poor is that of the Dispensary, which may be either a public or a private one. In the public dispensary we have a chairman and committee, who are elected by the members and honorary members, or sometimes by these only, who are certain philanthropic people who subscribe to the institution, but do not share in its benefits. Ordinary members may be defined as working persons and servants, their wives and children, who are not in receipt of parish relief, and are unable to pay for medical advice in the usual manner. For ordinary members 1½d. per week (for children under fourteen, 1d.) may be regarded as the average rate of payment, though a payment of 3d. or 4d. a week will often enable a man and his wife and their children under fourteen to enjoy the benefits of the institution. For servants a yearly subscription of about 5s. is the usual amount. For this subscription the members receive free medical treatment and medicine, though there is generally a small charge for bottles, when these are not supplied by the patient. The committee elect the medical practitioners, of whom, if the number of subscribers is large, there may be several. And generally the members are free to select the doctor they prefer.

Where the number of members is large there may be four or five medical men on the staff, who are generally paid in proportion to the number of members they have upon their respective books. A well-managed public dispensary is one of the greatest boons to the working classes, who, where such exists, should be most strongly urged to join it. If the management is capable, the medical men elected by it will be capable, and the treatment of the patients will be satisfactory. I have known the medical officers of more than one dispensary paid as much as £400 or £500 a year, sums which (in addition to what they make from their private practice) are sufficient to attract the most capable, especially of the younger, general practitioners in a large town.

The private dispensary is also a common institution in the poorer districts of large centres of population. Its principle is the same as that of the public dispensary, viz. the payment of a small weekly subscription, in return for which the members receive medical attention and medicine without further charge. It is private because it belongs to, and is worked by, some particular medical man, and is simply an arrangement between him and the members. This arrangement is actually found to be the best method of working a practice among the very poor. A thousand members at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a week means an income of more than £300 a year. And it is far easier for the poor to pay for their doctor in this way, than to have to pay 2s. 6d. a visit, in addition to the cost of medicine, when they are ill. The principle of both the public and the private dispensary is that of a small insurance against sickness.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

SICKNESS AND THE POOR LAW

Every social worker should have at least some knowledge of the law as it at present stands with regard to the treatment of the sick under the Poor Law. This knowledge may be gained from Aschrott and Preston Thomas's *The English Poor Law*

*System*¹ (an invaluable book for the social worker) or it may be obtained from any relieving officer or clerk to a Board of Guardians. [Guardians themselves, apart from their clerk, are not always a trustworthy authority on points of law.] At present, as Poor Law medical relief does not disenfranchise, there is a growing disposition (especially in London) to resort to it ; but medical relief is only too often the first step to other forms of Poor relief ; and therefore, for this reason if no other, people should be very strongly discouraged from applying for it, and, wherever possible, help should be given where this is the only alternative, and where help is deserved. Unfortunately by too many Poor Law medical relief is becoming regarded as "State" relief, and the enjoyment of it is regarded as a right. Of course, the Friendly Society and the Dispensary are the institutions which should render medical relief unnecessary, and for this reason should be very strongly commended.

¹ Chapter iv. section v. pp. 265 ff.

CHAPTER VIII

THE YOUNG MAN

I RETURN to our study of the Smith family, and would next consider George, the eldest son, now about twenty years of age. George Smith's history to this time may be considered as typical of that of thousands of young men in his position in life. Unlike the rest of the family, he was always physically strong. Before he was quite five years old he was sent to the nearest infant school. He was a sturdy little chap with a restless disposition and a positive incapacity for either sitting still or keeping out of mischief for five consecutive minutes. He was first taught his letters, then to read and write, after which he was gradually introduced to the mysteries of arithmetic, but he did not take kindly to books. Had careful attention been paid to his capacity for practical work, he might have been trained into a really skilful workman. As it was he was kept at tasks for which he had neither ability nor taste, and for which he gradually conceived a positive dislike. In consequence he was always being punished for idleness and inattention. Teachers who have to keep in order and instruct classes containing from sixty to seventy children, many of whom have a real genius for not doing as they are told, have little opportunity for studying the idiosyncrasies of character. They teach and they punish mechanically. If the children are obedient and attend to their work, all right; if not, then the cane which lies on the desk is the handiest means of enforcing discipline, as Georgie very early discovered. He was frequently caned in the infant school, and when at seven years old he was transferred to the boys' department he was caned even more frequently and more severely.

He left school on the very day on which the law permitted him. By that time he could read fairly well, he could write legibly, could perform certain simple arithmetical calculations, and had a somewhat confused idea of certain facts he had learnt during the process of various lessons on "scripture," history, and geography. During the last two years he was at school he had earned about two shillings weekly by selling newspapers each morning and evening, and another shilling by carrying out meat for a butcher during the whole of Saturday. Besides attending the day school he had also been sent by his parents to a neighbouring Sunday School, where he was a thorn in the flesh of every teacher through whose class he passed. These were earnest and God-fearing young men with a limited knowledge of the Bible and Prayer-book, with a yet more limited skill in imparting this knowledge to others, and with hardly any idea as to how to maintain discipline and keep the attention of their pupils. As the severest punishment in the Sunday School was a verbal reprimand from the superintendent, George considered himself justified in "taking out" of its teachers what the Day School teachers took out of him.

The day after he leaves school is to a working-class boy one of the most critical days of his life, for on that day is often, to a great extent, determined the nature of his after career. Neither from his schoolmaster nor from his parents did George receive a word of advice upon the choice of an occupation. His master never mentioned the subject to him, and all the advice his parents gave him was that he should at once try to earn as much as he could. The choice he actually made was determined in this way. Like most boys of his class he had one particular "chum." This boy had been "taken on" as a "nipper" in the goods warehouse of one of the railway companies. He informed George that he was getting five shillings a week with a promise of a rise of a shilling after Christmas. He also told George that if he liked he would speak to the foreman for him. The morning after he left school George went down to the warehouse, explained his object,

and the demand for the labour of sturdy boys being always in excess of the supply, was forthwith shown into the agent's office. Here he was set to read a short piece of handwriting, asked to write his own name and address, was set to do one or two very simple calculations in mental arithmetic, and was forthwith engaged at five shillings a week.

Here let me stay for a moment to consider a problem of great importance. I am only speaking the truth when I assert that the average working-class boy simply *drifts* into his first place without any other serious consideration than the amount of the wages he is to receive when he *begins* to work. As a rule, he pays absolutely no attention to what further prospects this work may offer; and this is especially true of the prospects of ten or twenty years hence. Too often he begins, continues, and ends as an "unskilled" workman. He takes up work which he can learn in a few days—work, in fact, which does not require learning, because it demands neither thought nor skill. From this, he often drifts to something which requires equally little skill; from that he may drift to work of a third kind. Frequently, before he is thirty he falls out of work. If asked what he can do, he replies "anything," which really means "nothing properly." The most strenuous effort should be made by the social worker to influence parents in regard to the true welfare of their children in this matter. I own this is not a hopeful task, for 5s. or 6s. at fourteen years of age, possibly 10s. or 12s. at sixteen years of age, and 16s. or 17s. at eighteen years of age, appeals far more strongly to the average poor parent than does 3s. a week at fourteen years of age with 1s. rise per annum till a young man is out of his apprenticeship at twenty-one years of age. Then we must remember that the introduction of machinery has largely reduced the necessity for the craftsman, the skilled hand-worker. Still, wherever it is possible, the strongest pressure should be put upon parents to induce them to see that their children are taught a trade. Above all, we should impress upon young people the advantage of making

themselves really expert in whatever work they take up. The really highly skilled workman is in as great demand to-day as ever. It is the man who is only moderately skilful, or wholly unskilful, who is a drug on the labour market.

Schoolmasters, and, with girls, school-mistresses, might do a really useful social work by studying the peculiar tastes, aptitudes, and inclinations of those of their pupils who are approaching the age when they must leave school. They might do much to influence both them and their parents in the wise choice of employment. As I write I have in my mind two headmasters of large elementary boys' schools who have made this particular work a speciality. Both these schools are situated in a large manufacturing district. Both these men had a striking reputation for absolute truthfulness and for exceptional judgment with regard to the character and capacity of any boy they recommended for a situation. Both in consequence were inundated with applications from employers. But neither, if they could possibly prevent it, would allow any boy of average ability to enter a situation which did not offer at least fair prospects (if the boy worked diligently) of steady advancement.

For two years George worked in the goods warehouse and went out with the driver of a lorry in its journeys up and down the town. By this time his wages had risen to 7s. a week. One day he was reprimanded by the foreman for some neglect of duty, whereupon, to give his own explanation, he "gave the foreman a bit of his mind, and notice at the same time," for he "was not going to stand his cheek." For no other reason he left the railway company, by which in all probability, had he worked steadily, he might have been employed for life. After a fortnight's holiday he found a berth at 9s. a week in a packing warehouse. The short-sightedness of lads of the class of George Smith is proverbial, and he was no exception to the rule. In this new situation he again remained two years, his wages during that time being raised to 13s. a week. Then he heard of a similar place where 15s. a week was

being offered for "a strong youth." This place he obtained, and there he still was. His wages were now, at the age of twenty, 18s. a week; not a bad wage for an unskilled labourer of those years, for we must remember that though he is now taller and stronger, and can lift heavier weights than he could when he was fourteen, he really *knows* little more than he did then.

But what are his prospects? To these I may say he never gives a moment's thought. He has always been able to get a place when he wanted one, and he presumes that he always will. His *actual* prospects are those of thousands of young men in a similar position. So long as trade is good, he will be moderately certain of more or less regular work at a maximum of 25s. a week, say, till he is thirty-five. When trade is slack and fewer "hands" are required, he may be "out" for weeks, possibly for months, at a stretch. By the time he is forty he will probably be getting a little slower in his movements, a fact which will at least to some extent tell against him should he have to seek a new master. At the same time he will be loth, as all workmen are, to accept a less wage than what he has been accustomed to receive. Gradually he will become a "casual" labourer with a constantly growing tendency to be amongst the unemployed. Before he is fifty he will, like his father before him, have to be maintained by the labours of others.

The problem suggested by the foregoing history—how to prevent recruits being continually added to the great host of unemployed, or only casually employed workmen—is an exceedingly difficult one. Certainly I am not prepared to offer any entirely satisfactory solution. But that is not the same thing as confessing that nothing can be done to mitigate the evil conditions of the present, or to lessen the intensity of the difficulty in the future. On the contrary, I believe that much may be done. Our first aim must be to cut off as far as possible the excessive supply of unskilled labour. There are various means of doing this. I have already indicated one—by advising boys when leaving school not to drift into those classes of

labour from which this supply is fed. Another means by which we might do much is a gradual reform of our educational system, a longer period of compulsory attendance at school with a very much more useful kind of instruction within the school, and at least a measure of compulsory attendance at a technical or trade continuation school until a youth is eighteen years of age. A third means which might be tried is the revival, wherever possible, of a modified form of the apprenticeship system; a fourth means would be to encourage young men to emigrate; a fifth, and one which, I believe, will be looked upon more and more favourably in the future, would be by shortening the hours of labour in all trades in which this is possible, and by the strict prohibition of "overtime"; a sixth, by offering various inducements to young men born in the country to remain there, and not, by flocking into the town, to increase the competition there. In each of these ways we might do something to arrest the continual addition of new recruits, not only to the great army of the actually unemployed, but to the still more numerous host of those whose possession of employment is so precarious that they can hardly say from week to week whether seven days hence they may not themselves be among the unemployed.

CHAPTER IX

THE YOUNG MAN'S CHARACTER

So far we have only considered what may be termed the *economic* aspect of George Smith's history. I would now consider some other, and not less important, aspects of that history. It will be admitted that the young man of the poorest classes is a very important, and at the same time a very difficult factor in the "social problem." But as we are ready to admit that the social problem as a whole is not entirely an economic, but also an ethical problem, so indeed is the problem of the young man—the future father and citizen—no matter to what class of society he belongs.

George Smith has a character which, like his body, has grown, or developed gradually, since the day he was born; and his position in society to-day is, and in the future will be, due to the nature and contents of his character, at the various stages of his career, as well as to the various economic and industrial conditions among which he lives. But to what is his character at present due? What have been the formative influences in its development during the years in which any character is most susceptible to influence?

The chief influences upon a young man's character to the age of twenty will be those of his home, his school, his work, and his amusements—the way in which he spends his leisure time. Under the last two we must, of course, include his companionships while at work and at play. We ought to be able to add to these influences that of religion. In his earlier days this will be part of the influences of home and school; as he grows up it will come more directly through the religious body to which he belongs. But

unfortunately, in the case of George Smith, as in the case of so many youths of this class, this influence is a very small one.

We will take the home influences first, and, among these, that of the father. This, among the very poor, so far as it is intentionally exercised upon the children, is, I fear, generally also very small. The average father of a family in this class of life, as a rule, takes but a small interest, and a very small share in the formation of his children's characters, that is so far as his influence is *consciously* exercised. There are, I know, many exceptions, but what I state is the rule. This neglect arises partly from ignorance and want of power, partly also from want of opportunity; for so long as he is in regular work, the hours when a poor man is at home with his children, except when he and they are asleep, are very few. What effect the compulsory shortening of the hours of labour would have in this direction is certainly worth serious consideration. Then the uneducated father knows little or nothing of the laws governing the development of character or of the forces, both good and evil, which produce that development. He is rarely able, or if able, he is still more rarely careful, to think out the probable results of "example" or of a firm but kindly discipline wisely exercised. And what proportion of the fathers in any class of society are careful to consider the influence of high ideals kept steadily before the minds of young people?

Bishop Walsham How used frequently to lament how little the Church does directly to teach the responsibilities of fatherhood, how small in comparison with what the Church does for mothers and children, is what it does for the fathers. I fear that in men's Bible classes, and in men's special services, this subject seldom has the attention bestowed upon it which it deserves. We teach zealously the duties of churchmanship and citizenship, but very rarely do we inculcate with sufficient clearness the duty of a father towards his growing boys and girls. Yet the unconscious, and often unintentional influence of a father, especially upon his sons, say from the age of fourteen, is always great.

The lads "take their cue" from their father. As *he* lives and acts, so, in all probability, will they one day behave.

The alienation of the men of the lower strata of the working classes from religion is notoriously great. And it is not easy to see by what means these can be most effectually brought again under its influence. This alienation, which rapidly affects their sons as they grow up, is not due to any reasoned disbelief in Christianity, though among the more thoughtful men there is a feeling of soreness against "the churches" which they regard as being on the side of those who have a large share of "this world's good," and not on the side of those who have not. Then the immense chasm which they see separating the practice from the profession of those who do attend a place of worship has, no doubt, affected them. But the chief causes of the alienation are indifference and custom. The very poor have unfortunately become largely indifferent to religion. Except when a death occurs in their family, or when severe sickness comes upon them, they seem very rarely to think seriously about it. Then the majority of them, like those of every other class, are very largely the slaves of fashion. It is not now the fashion for the very poor to attend a place of worship.

A great deal of what may be termed social work on behalf of the very poor is now being done apart from any direct connection with religion, though many of the most earnest social reformers are impelled by religious motives; and the activities of many of whom this can hardly be said are yet primarily due to the unconscious influence of ideas which have a Christian source. Movements having as their object the raising of wages (*e.g.* that against sweated industries), as well as the various efforts for mitigating the evils of unemployment, may be economic in the purpose they seek to accomplish; but they have originated in ideas (*e.g.* of the intrinsic value of human nature, and of the duty of doing, and getting others to do, justly), which are, at least indirectly, the result of Christian influence, and due to Christian teaching. Many of these well-meant efforts, as also many of the efforts on behalf of temperance, fail to

achieve their purpose. Why is this? To a great extent, I believe, it is because they are too purely *external*; they are almost entirely efforts *on behalf of* those who are seen to need help. If such efforts are to succeed the co-operation of the sufferers must be elicited. But this co-operation implies at least a measure of *character*, an ability to co-operate *in* those who are to be benefited. It is here that we see most clearly the use of religion in social reform, and how failure is due to the want of it. Where the aid of religion is wanting we are without the greatest of all character-making powers. As Bishop Phillips Brooks once remarked, if a wall is weak you can build a buttress against it to strengthen it, but you can only strengthen a human being from within. If people would remember this truth they would not be surprised to find that reform "by Act of Parliament" often fails to accomplish its object.

Very soon after George Smith left the Day School he also left the Sunday School. The years from fifteen to twenty-one or twenty-two are those in which, more than in any other period of life, a man's or a woman's character becomes fixed for good or for evil. In George's case, as in the case of so many youths of his class, the greatest of all the formative influences for good upon character was, during these critical years, wholly wanting. At his work he had to be regular, punctual, and to do as he was told. This discipline, so far as it went, was useful to him, but beyond this he obtained no help which would enable him to resist temptation. He was never taught the value, much less the duty, of self-sacrifice, self-discipline, or self-control. No high ideals of any kind were placed before him. The ethical code he possessed was almost entirely a self-regarding, and so a selfish one. He abstained from doing certain things because if he did them he might lose his employment, or might get into the hands of the police. As a newspaper-boy he had learnt to play pitch and toss with the coppers he received, and also to make small bets on the results of various "League" football matches. When he went to work, instead of pitch and toss, he made an occasional bet on a horse race. He

did not drink—few young men before they are twenty do, but in all probability, from want of self-control, as well as from the want of any interest of a useful nature, he will very likely begin to drink within the next ten years. The temptations to do so will meet him at almost every street corner, and at almost every hour when he is not actually engaged at his work.

I am neither ignorant, nor am I unmindful, of the excellent work which is being done in various ways among the boys and young men in the slums of our large towns. I know what admirable work is being done by clubs for boys and young men: I know of the various means and methods which are being employed to attract them, to interest, and to improve them. I know what excellent results are following the work of the "Church Lads'" and the "Boys'" brigades. But I know how difficult it is to provide the funds, and how still more difficult it is to find the workers to carry on these institutions. I know how difficult it is to induce young men who have leisure and means to give up even a small part of that leisure, and to expend even a small portion of those means, in order to be an influence for good upon the lives of their less fortunate brothers. I know how difficult the town boy of sixteen or seventeen years of age is to manage; I know with what great patience and tact he needs to be handled. But if he is to be saved, he must be saved by personal service. The compulsory continuation school, could it be established, would do much, but it will not do all. The redemption of society demands a much more general acceptance in practice of the responsibility of personal service. There can be no substitute for this. "Settlements" and especially the missions connected with our universities and public schools have done much to encourage young men with means and leisure to take up this work, and to find them definite opportunities and fields of service; but the area of service and the number of helpers still need to be greatly enlarged. We want more workers and especially more of those who will submit to at least a measure of training. Why should social work, which is really work of

a difficult nature, be regarded as work for which neither preparation nor training is required? One advantage of the "Settlement" is that in it this training can generally be acquired. At the head of it there is generally a man of experience from whom helpful guidance can be obtained.

One final word upon this subject. While it is true that work among lads and young men, if it is to be efficacious and permanent in its results, must be strongly inspired by and closely connected with religion, at the same time we must see that the religious teaching given is very carefully adapted to those to whom we would impart it. The teaching must be simple, it must be intensely real, at each step we must show its usefulness, and we must constantly appeal to experience.

The town boy is a very sharp critic, and is quick to discern the slightest suspicion of unreality. He is not always a fair critic; his judgments are by no means always either just or kindly. For this critical spirit we must be prepared, and we must give him as little opportunity as possible for this favourite exercise of his ingenuity. By nature, like other boys, he is inclined to be a hero-worshipper, and to this particular tendency we can often appeal with advantage. It is by providing him with worthy, instead of unworthy ideals that we can most generally help him.¹

¹ Those who are interested in the working lads of our large towns will find much help from *Manchester Boys*, by C. E. B. Russell, who is quite an expert in this kind of work.

CHAPTER X

THE DAY SCHOOL IN THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

I now pass on to consider the influence of the *School* upon the character and life of a young man in the position of George Smith. This thought of the school should suggest a whole world of possibilities to the social worker and social reformer. Using the words in a very comprehensive sense, I believe that in the improvement of our national system of education lies the chief means, as well as the most hopeful means, of making the future better than the present.

For years we have been engaged in the task of improving this, and I do not deny that much valuable work has been done. We have only to remember the average conditions of thirty or forty years ago in order to see what immense progress has been made. But we have not done, we are not even now doing, all that is possible.

There is a saying that "a home is not a hearthstone but a woman." It is equally true that a school is not a building, however elaborately planned, but a teacher. It is not the expensive apparatus, it is not codes and time-tables and regulations that make an efficient school; it is the teachers. Here lies the crux of the real educational problem to-day. Politicians may wrangle across the floors of the Houses of Parliament, advocates of various systems of religious education may hurl anathemas at each other from party platforms, experts may devise the most carefully graduated *curricula*, but until we get the right kind of *teachers*, and until we get a *sufficient supply* of these, our national elementary education will not be what it should be and might be. At present we cannot get sufficient

teachers of any kind, much less of the kind that are needed.

As a proof of the first statement, the following quotation from the last *Report of the Board of Education* will suffice: "In order to provide adequate staffs for elementary schools in 1909, not less than 13,500 fresh adult teachers should be available to begin service in that year. In order to provide these, not less than 21,000 boys and girls should have been brought into the early stages of the profession in 1906. The discrepancy between these figures is due to the considerable wastage, owing to the competition of other occupations,¹ during the pupil teacher and Training College period, and to the still heavier wastage due to the failure of a large number of pupil teachers to pass a qualifying examination entitling them to recognition as adult teachers. Unfortunately the total number of new pupil teachers who began their course in 1906-7 was not 21,000, but only about half that number, 10,900. . . . It would therefore appear that either a very determined effort must be made to increase the numbers of pupil teachers and bursars, *and as far as possible to open up new sources of supply*,² or the country must make up its mind to be badly handicapped in its efforts to improve its elementary schools by a very serious shortage of teachers, which will render it not only impossible to dispense with the employment, which is at this moment on the increase rather than the decrease, of unqualified teachers, but even necessary to surrender the little progress which is being made towards the much needed reduction of the inflated classes that are as yet one of the most serious obstacles to the efficiency of elementary schools." [pp. 53, 54.]

I have quoted at length from the Education Report, because I wish my readers to have official evidence of the actual state of things which exists at present *inside* the schools in which by far the greater part of the children of the nation are being educated. In the extract we have

¹ This seems to show that the profession is not made sufficiently attractive.

² The italics are my own.

proof, first, of a want of a sufficient number of teachers, which means too many children in each class; secondly, that many of the teachers actually employed are inefficient. Thus we have necessarily children taught mechanically and without individual attention, and we have this being done, not by experts, but by those who under the best conditions would be to some degree incapable. Such teachers under such conditions may be able to impart a certain amount of "book-knowledge" to the children, but there cannot be that careful *individual* training which true education should imply. Thus our elementary schools are, as character-forming institutions, failing to achieve their object.

I would draw special attention to these words from the Report: "as far as possible open up new sources of supply," *i.e.* of teachers. Here is indicated an object which the social worker and the social reformer should take most seriously to heart; for in the accomplishment of this object lies, I believe, the only possible solution of this most difficult problem. Let me condense my argument: First, the school is one of the chief institutions by means of which the future fathers and mothers, the future citizens, must be trained; secondly, the efficiency of the school for this purpose depends on the number and efficiency of the teachers; thirdly, at present the teachers are too few, and of these many are inefficient—therefore we must seek for more teachers, and more efficient ones, from a new source, *i.e.* from a source whence at present we are failing to obtain them. My conclusion is that we must try to obtain an additional supply of teachers from a somewhat higher grade of society than that from which the average elementary teacher is drawn to-day.

Much of what I am about to say may be widely and deeply resented, but I must say it. One of the greatest objects, and one of the greatest powers in education is culture. Now, the nature and the meaning of culture are both difficult to explain; for culture is much more easily *felt* than described. True "culture" is moral as well as mental, and includes a character formed under certain influences, and a power of forming such a character, as

well as the possession of knowledge and the ability to impart it. Culture is almost always the result of much intercourse with those who possess it.

In dealing with a subject of this kind a writer naturally runs the risk of being supposed to imply either more or less than he explicitly states. I will do my best to reduce that risk as much as possible.

The assertion that "manner is a great matter" is true, for manner is generally at least the expression of both thought and feeling, which themselves are factors of character. Refinement in either is a witness to refinement in character. We may take reverence as an example. Reverence in behaviour is "good manners" raised to a very high plane. If it is genuine it arises from a feeling and an estimation of high worth. Again, really good manners are some indication of a high degree of self-discipline, and in children of their having been well disciplined. But both self-discipline, and the useful exercise of discipline, tend to the formation of character.

No one can be much in an elementary school without being struck, as a rule, with the want of refinement in both teachers and scholars. A very great deal of what "refinement" implies seems to be wanting; and with the absence of this, there is the absence of much which is most valuable in life. Too often refinement in manner is regarded as something wholly external—a kind of surface polish: nothing is more untrue. Now this refinement, which is of such value in life, the children can very rarely learn at home. Their one opportunity of learning it, of obtaining it, is generally the school, where, under present conditions, that opportunity is rarely afforded. As a testimony to its value and as an additional explanation of my meaning I would adduce the following:—

In the course of many years of pastoral work in five large parishes I have visited thousands of homes. As soon as I enter a home, I can from experience almost always tell whether either the father or the mother or both have been in what is termed "good service," that is, have been in close contact for any length of time with

people of refinement. The appearance and arrangements of the home, the manners of the parents and children, are altogether different from those of people who have never had this experience. And if they happen to have had morally good masters and mistresses the effect is still more striking. The advantage to these people of having mixed with those of a superior social position—especially, I repeat, if these have been people of a high moral tone—has been very real.

My plea is this, that whenever possible young people of a class superior to that from which the average elementary teacher is now drawn should be induced to take up elementary teaching as a profession. Those who wish to lead a really useful life, to find both an opportunity and a means of doing good on a large scale, can seek none better or greater than such a position will give. In the future both the status and the stipend of the elementary teacher must improve. During the actual hours of work the strain is doubtless considerable; but the hours of labour are short—five and a-half in the day, or twenty-seven in the week. The average amount of holidays is about ten weeks in the course of the year. The following is a somewhat low scale of salaries at the present time: (1) for men (certificated) from £80 to £125 a year as assistants, from £115 to £250 as head teachers; (2) for women (certificated) from £70 to £90 a year as assistants, from £75 to £150 as head teachers. [I presume that those who do take up this work will wish to take it up as *efficient* teachers.] But we must remember that for those who make themselves exceptionally efficient, there are a multitude of superior posts at the disposal of the various Education Authorities to some of which excellent salaries are attached. Lastly, we must remember that the conditions under which the work is done are rapidly improving. I refer to the improved buildings, many of which contain teachers' rooms with a private room for the head teacher. Why is it that so few young men and women of the class from which the average teacher in the secondary school is drawn have so far entered *elementary*

schools? There seem to be two chief reasons: First, it has been the fashion in the past to look down upon elementary teaching. For this there is no reason beyond the fashion itself. Secondly, I am told that the present race of elementary teachers resents to some degree the intrusion into their profession of those who belong to the class I have in view. But this drawback the very entrance of more men and women of this class would automatically cure.

For those whose object is to do as much good as possible among their fellow-men and women, who wish to do the most useful kind of social work, who wish to be agents in bringing about the most permanent of social reforms—for these I know of no position which offers greater opportunities than that of a teacher in an elementary school.¹

¹ The Education Office has recently issued a pamphlet, *How to become a Teacher in an Elementary School* (price 4d.).

CHAPTER XI

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

BUT George Smith also, as I have already noticed, for nine years attended a Church Sunday School. What effect had this upon his character? Not so much as it might have had. The cause of this failure was partly due to George himself; it was also partly due to the discipline and the teaching in the Sunday School.

The possibilities of the Sunday School as an agent in social reform must not be neglected; though, as far as I am aware, the subject has so far received but little attention in books dealing with the Social Problem.¹ Compared with the Day School as an agent in the work of social progress the influence of the Sunday School may be small. I say "may be," for I think that the influence of the Sunday School in this work might be very much greater than it generally is. The cause of this failure lies in the aim and in the methods with which the Sunday School is usually conducted.

As far as the Church of England is concerned, except to some degree in the north of England, and especially in Lancashire, the possibilities of the Sunday School have hardly yet been realised. I do not say that these have been realised by Nonconformists: but I think it will be generally admitted that they have been so among them to a greater extent than among Churchmen.

The reason usually assigned for the comparative failure of the Sunday School is the paucity of teachers and their general inefficiency. But is not this rather an *excuse* than

¹ See, however, Professor Shailer Mathew's *The Church and the Changing Order*, pp. 146 ff.

a reason? Is it not a condition which is capable of being remedied?

The real reason for the inefficiency of the average Sunday School is that neither the importance nor the possibilities of the work have been properly recognised. By the great majority of the clergy the Sunday School has been regarded, and therefore treated, as quite secondary to the Day School. After what I have written in the previous chapter, no one can accuse me of belittling the possibilities of the Day School. I want to see an equal importance attached to the Sunday School. I fear that, as a body, the clergy have not impressed this importance upon the laity. Of this I feel sure, that, if we compare the practical interest shewn, the actual service rendered, in the Sunday School by what may be termed the leading laity—men and women—in an average Church congregation with that in an average Nonconformist congregation, the practical interest of the latter will be found to be far the greater and more widely spread. Here is one proof. In the average Church Sunday School the superintendents are frequently the vicar and his curates, in the Nonconformist school these offices are generally filled by influential laymen.

In what I am writing I have more especially in view the town Sunday School, partly because I am better acquainted with this class of school, though I have worked in country schools, but mainly because it is in the towns, and in the class from which our Sunday scholars are, or might be, drawn that the social problem is most acute.

I may appear to some of my readers to be dwelling upon the Sunday School, at any rate in a book upon Social Work, at inordinate length. My reason for laying stress upon it as an instrument for social reform is at least threefold: First, I believe its relative importance as a teaching institution must increase in the future; secondly, under the term "Sunday School" I would include all the Bible classes held in a parish, indeed all the work of religious teaching outside the Day School; and thirdly, because it is, as I have already stated, an instrument whose possibilities are so little recognised to-day.

One mark of the Sunday School is its purely *voluntary* nature. From a Christian point of view this feature is immensely in its favour. The work of the superintendents and teachers is voluntary, and, except for the pressure exerted by the parents upon the younger scholars, the attendance of those who come to be taught is voluntary. In the great Sunday Schools of the north of England quite a large proportion of the scholars come long after the age at which parental control actually ceases ; indeed, many of the "scholars" are themselves parents, and a few are grandparents ! That this need not be confined to the north the following figures are some proof. In my own parish of less than 3000 people we have in our Sunday Schools and Bible classes on a Sunday afternoon about 550 scholars, of whom quite 160 will be over seventeen years of age, and I should say 80 or 90 of these will be over twenty-five years of age.

With all voluntary teaching and learning there is connected at least some measure of self-sacrifice, and therefore some measure of earnestness. One of our chief aims must be to foster this earnestness, and to guide it in right directions ; chief among these I would place that of trying to use it so as to improve all the various kinds of social relationships and the discharge of all the various social responsibilities. We must try to make the scholars not only good men and good women, but good sons and daughters, good fathers and mothers, honest and industrious workpeople ; we must teach them the privileges, duties, and responsibilities, not only of Churchmanship, but of citizenship.

The great majority of the teachers in many large Sunday Schools are working people ; they belong to the same class as those they teach. This is generally supposed to be inevitable where almost all the people in a parish are of the working class. But it need not be inevitable in large towns, where there are always at least a few "better" class parishes. These parishes ought to supply far more social workers than are required for their immediate need, and among these social workers there should be a rich

supply of Sunday School teachers. A narrow parochialism and a large measure of parochial selfishness still hinder the Church's work. I can recall a certain Nonconformist congregation, of very moderate size, but composed almost entirely of the well-to-do, indeed of the wealthy, and which contained an unusual proportion of thoughtful people. The number of workers which that congregation provided for the slum districts of the great city on whose borders it was situated was remarkable. For years the members of that congregation were carefully taught the responsibilities of social service, and carefully trained to social work; indeed, to do some kind of social work became practically a rule among them. They supported not only with money, but with personal service two missions, besides finding workers for almost every kind of useful effort where help of this nature was urgently needed.

The clergy can hardly do a more useful work than to teach people the responsibility of social service, to inspire them to take up some form of that service, and to train them, or to get them to train themselves for that service. They must teach the absolute necessity of service—the universality of the Church's ministry; they must preach constantly the stewardship of leisure, wealth, education, and position. All that I have said in the last chapter of the advantage of "culture" to the Day School teacher applies equally to the Sunday School teacher. But what of the uneducated teachers, whether men or women? As almost all positions in life, it has been said, have their compensations, so these have certain great advantages. From their own personal experience they know the peculiar needs, temptations, difficulties, and possibilities of their scholars as few or none outside their own walk in life can know them. What the uneducated teachers chiefly need is training. If the clergy will train them, and if they will submit themselves to training, they, too, may become most valuable social workers.

In the Sunday School our task is twofold, first to promote discipline, especially self-discipline; secondly, to implant ideas which are both lofty and useful; for it is

ideas, which are "powers towards conduct," that inspire. In the Sunday School the text-book, the source from which we teach, is the Bible—the best of all books upon Social Work and Social Reform. But the teachers need to have this fact about the Bible revealed to them. The teaching of the Bible does not lie upon its surface, certainly its best social teaching does not. In guidance how to find, and to apply it, lies some of the best work which can be accomplished in teachers' preparation classes and in Bible classes.

A few hints upon this may not be out of place here: The "Law," as found in many chapters of Exodus and especially in Deuteronomy, reveals to us, especially when we consider the age in which it was written, a wonderful social code. How often are its social rules and social provisions pointed out? The historical books are not only history, but contain much philosophy of history. The nature and results of errors committed by both rulers and subjects are made plain. The prophets, of course, were great statesmen, and especially great social reformers. No one can read intelligently, for example, the earlier chapters of Isaiah, or the books of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Malachi without seeing this. It is the *social* conditions of the people which they constantly deplore; it is their *social* sins which they most pointedly rebuke. The Book of Proverbs, if in a narrower sphere, is full of social instruction. There is much also in the Psalms. Then in the Bible we constantly find the ideal set over against the actual. This is the key to much of the Messianic teaching. A good deal that we are inclined to interpret as having only a personal reference has really a social one. The thought of a Messianic State and a Messianic People is at least as common as that of a Messianic Ruler.

In the New Testament the amount of social teaching is proportionately even greater, and is capable of even wider application; indeed, its universal applicability is one of its most striking features. In the teaching of our Lord, as of His Apostles, we shall look in vain for arguments for or against any particular form of government,

or outward or legal framework of society; but we shall find a great wealth of teaching upon the right discharge of all the common social relationships of life—upon the duties of parents towards their children, and children towards their parents, upon the right relationship of husband and wife, employer and employed, upon the care of the sick and the suffering, upon the duty of the rich towards the poor. Because this teaching is often implicit and indirect, it is not the less stringent nor the less insistent.

I may notice particularly how our Lord again and again draws attention to the evils resulting from people failing to live up to their social responsibilities. This teaching is the key to the meaning of the parables of the Prodigal Son, of the Good Samaritan, of Dives and Lazarus, of the Rich Fool, the Unjust Steward, and the Wicked Husbandmen. But, unfortunately, as I have already stated, the application of this social teaching to the needs and difficulties of the present is rarely perceived or pointed out.

George Smith was never confirmed, and unfortunately he ceased to attend Sunday School when he was fifteen. We ought to do all in our power to retain the youths and to induce them to attend Confirmation classes, which may well form the break between the ordinary Sunday School and the Bible class, and may become the stepping-stone from the one to the other.

The Confirmation class, whether for youths or girls, offers an admirable field for most useful Christian social teaching. For it is there that all which is implied in membership in a great society is specially brought before the candidates. If the meetings of the class are sufficiently numerous,—the special preparation should be spread over at least three months—then the young people can be instructed how to fit themselves for some form of public service, and earnestly encouraged to do this. And they can be clearly shown that membership *involves* service.

The amount and the excellence of the social teaching of the Church Catechism can hardly be exaggerated, and

the Catechism is, of course, the text-book for the Confirmation class. Let us remember that in it the whole personality is at once claimed for Christ, and therefore claimed for self-sacrifice: it is also claimed for all that membership in Christ's mystical body must involve. The Creed expresses the individual's responsibility towards the common faith, which embodies the principles of the common life. The Commandments forbid, and condemn, all the various forms of unsocial sin, and from them we may show that every sin is unsocial in its results. The Lord's Prayer is full of social aspirations and social ideals. The Duty towards our Neighbour, which cannot be separated even in thought from our Duty towards God, is really a code of rules for social life. The Sacraments are social signs, and apart from the responsibilities of membership in a body are unintelligible.

Lastly, we must remember Professor Hort's two great dicta: First, that the Christian must mean man at his best; and secondly, that the Church must mean society at its best. Sometimes it has been remarked that among Nonconformists we see more evidence of readiness to seek and to discharge social service than among Churchmen; that, considering the relative numbers of each, we find a larger proportion of Nonconformists on representative bodies, such as Town, or District Councils. One reason given for this is the more clear and more stringent enforcement upon them of the meaning and duties of "Church membership." Be this as it may, the Sunday School, the Bible class, and the Confirmation class, when efficiently conducted, should each serve as a preparation for the proper discharge of all forms of social relationship, for the doing of all kinds of social duty.

CHAPTER XII

THE YOUNG WOMAN

FROM the consideration of the young man I now turn to consider the young woman, his sister. Clara Smith is now about nineteen years of age. For several years her experiences of life were very much like those of her brother. Like him she was sent to the Day School before she was five and left it the day the law allowed her. If the nine years spent there could have been passed more usefully by the boy, they certainly could have been so by the girl. If a little more culture and refinement in the atmosphere of the school would have been an advantage to him, they certainly would have been a very great help to her. But, as it was in the boys' school, so it was in the girls'. There were far too many scholars in a class, there was the same mechanical teaching and punishing, the same want of individual attention and of care spent upon the training of character.

Doubtless of recent years there has been some improvement in elementary schools for girls as well as in those for boys. But this has as yet gone but a very little way so far as regards the subjects upon which the children's time is chiefly spent. They are not taught what in after life will be most important and really useful for them. In this particular school the girls had occasional instruction on what was termed "domestic science," a somewhat lofty title for the actual contents of the teaching, and it was given by teachers who themselves had very little practical knowledge of what they tried to impart. Besides this the girls "did some sewing" on certain afternoons in the week. But how can one teacher look over the work of some sixty children? Actually during this hour the children did very much what they liked, except during the rare intervals when the teacher came round.

It is now five years since Clara Smith left the Day School; and all she now retains of what she learnt there is ability to devour a large supply of penny novelettes, to write a very imperfect hand, to do simple sums, whose results are generally inaccurate, also to cobble up a rent in her clothes, or darn a hole in her stockings in a fashion of which any woman ought to be ashamed.

Of course, she went also to Sunday School, where, being of a lively, not to say of a mischievous disposition, she was, like her brother, a thorn in the flesh to each of the very inefficient teachers under whom in succession she came. Whilst she should have been listening to their very inadequate explanations of the Church Catechism, if she was not chattering to her next neighbour on either side of her, she was carefully noticing and passing mental judgment upon the millinery and dress of every teacher and scholar she could see. Consequently of all she was *supposed* to learn in the Sunday School she now retains only a somewhat hazy idea of the chief contents of certain "Bible stories," but with practically no idea of how to apply the teaching of these in her own life.

The ethical code of girls of the class and nature of Clara Smith is difficult to understand, and still more difficult to explain without giving a false impression. The evolution of this ethical code, both in the individual and in the class, would be not only an interesting, but an instructive, study. Upon one point she, as other girls in the same position, is firmly convinced—she "must look after herself," and in "herself" is included what she believes to be her interests. One application of this principle is that she declines under any circumstances to pay more than 8s. a week for her board and lodging at home; though now she earns on an average about 14s. 6d., for she is quick at her work, which is paid by the piece. To all intents and purposes she is a lodger, or a paying guest. Again, her time, after she has done her day's work at the factory, must be her own. It was all very well when she was fourteen years old for her mother to demand from her a certain amount of help in the housework. Her mother shall not demand that now. As soon as she has had her tea she will spend

the evening just as she chooses. This generally means "walking out," *i.e.* about the streets with her "young man," a youth a year older than herself, or if not with him, then with one or more of the girls with whom she works at the factory. About two years ago a lady induced her to join a club for working girls, to which she still pays an occasional visit; but she does not like even the very mild degree of restraint which is required there. She much prefers the freedom of the streets where she can talk and laugh as loudly as she wishes, and where she can amuse herself by jostling other young women, or, still better, young men. Strangers to the life of our great manufacturing towns are often shocked at the apparently ungovernable excitement of the boys and girls in the streets in the evening. This excitement is very largely the reaction from the long day of monotonous toil, the perpetual, never-ceasing repetition of the same identical action. As one girl of this class once remarked, "when you've been a few days at a press, *you want to scream.*" Then the curious blend of indulgence and privation to which they are subject in their childhood doubtless tends to a want of self-control. The favourite alternative to the streets is half an evening at "the Palace" where they give two "shows" every night. Those who provide the entertainment there know well the tastes of those for whom they cater. The more "lamp black and lightning" there is about the programme the better. "Neck-breaking" acrobatic performances are highly appreciated, and the greater the amount of real danger about these the better. They satisfy the craving for excitement. Comic songs with a certain amount of "suggestiveness" are popular, and "broad" jokes are much to the taste of the audience.

Here there arises a difficult question for those who are anxious to raise the tone and generally to improve the class of girls of which Clara Smith is an average example. They feel they must provide a counter attraction to the streets and the music hall; for to very few of these girls is an evening in their homes anything but a penance, and only to be endured when sickness or hopelessly bad weather compels them to stay there. What they dread above

everything else is being "dull." The monotony of their daily work, which is at least partially the cause of their fathers' seeking the excitement produced by drinking or by gambling, is equally the cause of their demanding excitement produced in some other way. A certain number of girls of this class undoubtedly do both drink and gamble, though I should say it would be easy to exaggerate the prevalence of these habits among them. The majority seek the apparently necessary excitement in the ways I have indicated. But excitement in some form or other they will have; the problem is how to provide this for them in as harmless a manner as possible, that is, in a way which shall produce the smallest possible danger of evil results. Many excellent workers among them are strong advocates of teaching them, and allowing them, to dance. There is certainly much to be said for this. Those who oppose it are either imperfectly acquainted with the nature and longings, indeed with the needs of these girls, or they base their opposition on the ground that they must not foster a taste for something which may ultimately lead to evil; in other words, they fear that if these girls are encouraged to dance in schoolrooms under careful supervision, they will also dance in places where no supervision is possible. Then there is a further question—if dancing is permitted should it be only among the girls themselves, or should "mixed" dancing be allowed?

We must remember the type of girls of which we are thinking—the rougher element among the factory-girl class. Where these girls are numerous, and where strict supervision can be obtained, I should say, "permit dancing among themselves on two or three evenings a week during the winter, but only in the last hour of an evening, and when the first hour has been spent in some useful and interesting occupation, *e.g.* in gymnastic exercises, or in listening to the reading of some thrilling story with a good moral, or in some form of useful instruction. After their work is done these girls often long for some form of physical exercise. The following question was recently put by an experienced social worker: Among girls of this age in the upper and middle classes of society, as among young

men of the same age, there is a plentiful indulgence in various games; also we do give to boys and young men of the working class an opportunity for exercise, viz. by supporting cricket and football clubs among them; but what is done to supply the need of physical exercise for girls and young women of the working classes? For surely such exercise is just as necessary and as good for them as it is for their better-off sisters?

I come now to a somewhat delicate subject, yet one which cannot be shirked in a book whose object is to aid the social worker in assisting those who need help. What is the average standard of "morality"—I use the word in its narrow, but more usual signification to-day—among girls of the class to which Clara Smith belongs? I have put this question to many workers among such girls; I have put it to highly respectable forewomen in factories; I have put together my own conclusions from visiting hundreds of the homes of these girls; I have spoken both directly and indirectly on the subject with scores of young men of the same class. My impression is that *actually* girls of the type we are considering are generally far more pure than we might assume, either from watching their behaviour in the streets at night, or from overhearing their conversation as we pass by them. The proverb one might be inclined to use—"Where there is smoke there is fire"—is *not generally* true of them. The reason for this does not, I fear, arise from any lofty standard or ideal of personal purity. It does not follow from their having any keen sense of what we may term the wickedness of sin. They will frequently "bandy" remarks with men, and not always young men, which would shock the ears of any modest woman, and certainly modesty is not a common virtue among them. The actual conduct of these girls is generally ruled by prudential motives: they are as a class strongly impressed with the necessity of "looking well after themselves." They do not mean to get into trouble, or to suffer any unnecessary inconvenience. They have, as a rule, a clear idea of possible consequences, if they do not take care of themselves. But this cautiousness, if it may be so termed, does not apply when they are definitely looking

forward to marriage within a short time, when they have a definite promise upon which they feel they can depend. Here, the moral standard, the idea of right and wrong, among the class I have in view, is extremely difficult to understand, especially by those who do not enter into their way of looking towards the future.¹ And here, again, it is to some extent what may be termed a selfish motive, a looking after themselves and their own interests, which governs their conduct. This is true both of the man and the girl. We speak of "early and improvident" marriages among the poor. But from their point of view early marriages are not necessarily improvident. If the poor can be sure of a family, it is in the family that they see some security for their own maintenance in the future. When they fall out of work there will be the children's earnings to fall back upon. Let us consider the case of a man who at twenty-three marries a girl of twenty-one. Let us suppose they have four or five children in somewhat rapid succession. For at least ten or twelve or even fifteen years the man is fairly certain of being generally in work; then work may become uncertain, even difficult to obtain, but by that time, under present conditions, the children will begin to earn good wages. Then, if the father does fall out of work, there will be the earnings of both the wife and the children coming into the home; thus there is little fear of starvation. From my own experience I should say that, except when the father falls out of work while the children are very young, cases of extreme distress are comparatively rare where there is a family of moderate size. Thus, while we may quite justly speak of the improvidence of early marriage in the case of a professional man—before he has made for himself a sufficient income or an assured position—it does not follow that an early marriage among the very poor means improvidence.

While dealing with this subject I would add that I believe that among the *superior* working class, as among the classes above them, the age of marriage is gradually being postponed. Possibly the cause of this is the same in

¹ Out of nine recent consecutive entries in the marriage register of my own church I find that in eight the same address for the man and woman was given.

both—the wish to be able to maintain a somewhat higher standard, or scale of living, than may be possible with a young family and a small income. Their conception of the “necessaries” of life has become raised and enlarged. They feel they must have more in the way of comfort than their fathers and mothers had. If this prudential postponement of marriage does not proceed too far, and if it is not accompanied by what one might naturally fear, we cannot but feel that it does mark a distinct desire—a laudable one—to rise in the scale of civilisation. That in this particular class there is any widespread attempt to evade the responsibilities of marriage I should say there is as yet very little evidence.

What can be done to improve the general tone of the class of girls to which Clara Smith belongs? For these girls are very numerous in all our manufacturing towns, and they will eventually become the mothers of a large number of the future men and women of England. When Clara Smith has a home of her own, unfortunately this will be very much like her mother’s, and her children will be brought up, or permitted to grow up, in very much the same way. Thus, unless some widespread reformation can be brought about, the evils which we deplore will be perpetuated.

To deal successfully with girls of this class requires a special aptitude which implies a special training. What we require is a large number of women who have the requisite leisure to undergo this training, and who have the self-sacrificing love requisite to devote themselves towards trying to improve the lives and the characters of their less fortunate younger sisters. The reason why so much of the work done among these girls is so ineffective is because so large a proportion of the workers are untrained. My advice to all who would take up this work is: Begin under the guidance of a trained worker; ask to be allowed to associate yourself with her; then, when you have become expert, not only enlist the help of others, but try to train them.

But we must do more than deal with the girls who already exist. We must, as far as we can, try to cut off

the possibility of girls growing up without a high conception of what life and character should mean. To do this we must first improve the elementary schools, and we must make the teaching in the Sunday School much more practical or useful ; secondly, we must do all we can to prevent girls going into factory work ; thirdly, when girls do go into this work, we must see that by law their employers are compelled to allow them to attend a continuation school for two hours in the morning or in the afternoon on two days in the week : and we must see that this attendance is made compulsory until they are at least eighteen years of age. We must see that the teachers in these schools are persons of some culture, and are well paid for the work. In these schools, while some of the instruction might be technical, a certain proportion of it should be devoted to teaching the girls what every woman ought to know ; they should be trained in household management, and able to do what every woman ought to be capable of doing. Then the girls should be influenced to want more, and to have very different wants from what they have at the present time. The cultivation of the taste is no small part of education. At present most of their money is spent on cheap finery. They must be taught to want better food and more comfortable homes. Their list of "necessaries" must be much enlarged, and the consciousness of the need, of the demand, will help to create the effort to supply.¹

Lastly, the disciplinary, rather than the merely emotional, side of Christianity must be made prominent in the religious teaching which is offered to them. It is self-discipline which they need ; and nothing will prove to them the value of this more than the ordered Christian life. Too often, I fear, the religious teaching they obtain leaves this altogether out of sight. They have been characterised as "characterless." The charge is widely true. It is to making it untrue that religious effort on their behalf must be directed. They must be shown what religion demands and what it does.

¹ A thoughtful German writer has spoken of "the cursed wantlessness" of the very poor.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR

I HAVE now considered in detail all the members of the Smith family except the two youngest children—the boy Fred, who is eleven, and the little girl Mabel, who is eight. These two are, of course, still at school both on week days and on Sundays. They are not supposed to be at work ; but Fred, as his brother did, sells newspapers every morning and evening, for which he earns about eighteen-pence a week, and on Saturdays he also carries out meat for a small butcher in a side-street, for which he gets a shilling. Mabel has already begun to help her mother with little jobs connected with the work which comes into the house. When she ought to be getting fresh air, or even to be in bed, she has to stand by her mother to hand her various things in order to save time. A social worker, who had made a study of child labour, and especially of the way in which little children were compelled to assist in sweated work, was asked, I suppose what you call work is little more than their being allowed to amuse themselves by helping their mothers? To which she replied, Children do not regard as amusement what they are whipped for not doing, or if they complain that they are tired of doing it. Continuous labour had made Mrs. Smith hard, and she could get on with her work much more quickly when Mabel was by to hand her what she wanted.

Much which I might have said about the home and school life of Fred and Mabel I have already anticipated in dealing with the elder ones ; but there are certain features of child life among the poor which I have not

touched upon. To some of these I will now call attention.

There are social reformers who say that an undue proportion of the energy, especially of Christian workers, has been spent upon the children, and that while almost concentrating their efforts upon the children these same workers, have to a great extent, neglected the parents. Here we are face to face with a difficult problem and one capable of a wide application—how to add without subtracting. The problem constantly meets both the religious and the social worker. As examples of it we may take the following: How is a man to take interest in the duties of citizenship without taking less interest in his home? How is a woman to take interest in various kinds of religious work without in the least neglecting the work of the household to which she belongs? How are we to increase interest in the work of Foreign Missions without in the least lessening our interest in the work lying at our own doors? Within reasonable limits the problem is not insoluble, and, unless the social worker is constantly attempting its solution, much of his work will be inefficacious. Often it is most necessary for him to remember our Lord's words, "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." As I have already pointed out, it is impossible for the social worker to isolate either objects, or individuals, or classes of people. We cannot isolate temperance work; as soon as we try to do this work earnestly we shall find we are in the midst of a network of contributing causes each of which demands attention. So we cannot isolate the question of the children from that of the parents. Should we attempt this, our efforts are doomed to failure. Where we often have failed is in succumbing to the temptation to consider them apart. We have forgotten how closely the character and welfare of the children depend on those of the parents. We are very apt to consider the children as we see them in school or in the various meetings we arrange for their benefit, and to forget the nature of the home influence to which they are at the same time subject.

We must try to realise upon how much, that is upon how many different factors, the welfare of the child depends. First, there are hereditary influences and tendencies. These must not be forgotten. At the same time it is very easy to overrate both their strength and what are sometimes regarded as their inevitable results. We are very fond of speaking of "tendencies," and of using them as excuses for failure. It is much more wise to regard these as "calls to special care." The best way of regarding evil tendencies, as of other difficulties in life, is to consider that they exist in order that they may be overcome. The tendencies of which we think in connection with a child are usually of two kinds: First, physical, *i.e.* special liability to ill-health from want of a strong constitution; secondly, moral, *i.e.* from liability to certain forms of temptation. Among parents with adequate means physical weaknesses are carefully noticed and every effort is made to eradicate or counteract them. Among the ignorant and poor they are either not understood, or the means which should be taken for the future good of the children are not available. What is the use of telling the poor mother in a small cottage in a slum, and who can hardly provide the bare necessities of life, to see that her sick child has "plenty of fresh air and an ample supply of good and nourishing food." We are telling her to "provide" what it is entirely out of her power to obtain. The waste of child life in the poor districts of our large towns from ignorance and poverty combined is appalling. Even by many of those who survive, the results of the want of proper treatment in childhood are carried through life. Of all the pathetic sights I know there is none more pathetic than the children's wards of a large general hospital. If the would-be social reformer needs stimulus—something to fire his zeal or maintain his power of perseverance among difficulties—let him occasionally visit these. He will then, if he has any imagination, see the need for effort.

In regard to tendencies of character I would draw the attention of my readers to the following somewhat lengthy

extract, which puts some of the results of the best recent opinion on heredity and early influence both temperately and wisely: "As life is a process of internalising the world, and the environment is the potential content of character, the power of society over unformed childhood is indefinitely great. And it must be turned more deliberately and systematically in this direction of developing the character. We are entitled to hope more from such action, and bound to attempt more than we do. And we should probably do more were we not misled by false notions of the fixity of character in childhood as of its fluidity in later life.

"Judging from my own observation I should say that biological metaphors, and especially the argument from heredity, have something to answer for in this context. They conceal the fact that rational life implies stronger powers of reaction, and is always nearer being a new beginning or a potential reincarnation of the world as a whole than animal life is. The notion that the children of dissolute parents carry with them a definite predisposition towards vice has had much to do with paralysing social effort on their behalf. The adoption of children left by their parents in circumstances where a strong and virtuous manhood cannot grow without a miracle would be more general were it not for this fear. But is this fear justified? Biological science has investigated with great thoroughness the problem of the transmission to offspring of the *acquired* characters of parents; and its verdict is 'Not proven.' Nevertheless, in our social practice the truth of this doubtful hypothesis is taken for granted. It is assumed that the children of depraved parents are not only physically inferior to others and afflicted with an unstable nervous disposition (which is probably true as a rule), but also that they are charged with definite propensities towards a degraded life.

"This view, however, is not endorsed by those social reformers who have had most to do with placing ill-treated and neglected children in happier surroundings. The Poor Law Inspector in Glasgow, Mr. J. R. Motion, sends every

year to Kirkcudbrightshire in the south of Scotland, to Ross-shire and Inverness-shire in the north, and to the remote islands of Iona and Islay, numbers of little children found in the streets, 'picked up selling newspapers between the knees of drunkards in public-houses.' On being asked by the writer how far these children, born almost invariably of the worst parents, suffered from their inheritance, his startling reply was, 'Provided you get them young enough, they cannot be said to suffer at all from that cause.' He supported his conclusion by statistics which showed that out of some 630 children sent out and kept under close observation for years, only some 23 turned out bad. 'A smaller proportion,' it was playfully added, than if they had been the sons of ministers or professors.'"¹

To-day an almost bitter controversy rages over a question which may be thus expressed, "Are the children the children of their parents, or the children of the nation?" Or, in other words, in regard to the children, what are the rights and the responsibilities respectively of the parents and of the State? Few of those who are prepared to give an immediate answer to this question realise how much has to be taken into consideration. Let us think of a few further questions which arise from an attempt to solve it. Why is education to-day, not only in this country, but in many other countries, compulsory and free? Why has the State taken upon itself this responsibility, and so far relieved parents of bearing it? I am often told that, if education is compulsory, it must be free. But it is not actually free. It is rather compulsorily co-operative. The poor pay for the education of their children indirectly, *i.e.* through increased rent (owing to increased rates) and through taxes on certain commodities, as well as through somewhat reduced wages, though very few of them remember this. I believe that actually the poor took more interest in the education of their children when they paid for it directly through the weekly fee than they do now when they pay for it indirectly through increased taxation. But educa-

¹ Professor Henry Jones on "The Working Faith of the Social Reformer," *Hibbert Journal*, January 1906" (pp. 311-313).

tion must be compulsory because the State cannot afford that children—its children (?)—shall grow up in ignorance. We already pay too heavily for the inefficient and the unskilled, through foreign competition, through the Poor Law, and through funds raised for the unemployed. Thus the cost of compulsory education may be regarded as a premium paid by the nation for insurance against the inevitable results of ignorance and want of skill.

A further question: Is it possible to educate children who are insufficiently fed? You cannot expect the child who is hungry, or even ill-nourished, to learn its lessons properly. Therefore, some argue, such children must be fed at the cost of the State. Others are strongly against this "State-feeding": they argue that the results of removing, at least so far as direct action is concerned, another responsibility from the parents will have a disastrous effect upon these. I say "as far as direct action is concerned," because "free meals," if provided by the State, would mean another additional charge upon the rates, which, again, would in all probability mean an increase in rent.

The law¹ at present is briefly as follows: Any education authority may furnish such land, buildings, furniture, and apparatus, and such officers and servants as may be necessary for the organisation, preparation, and service of meals for children attending school, but "the authority shall not incur any expense in respect of the purchase of food to be supplied at such meals." Further, the Act provides that the parent of the children shall be charged for the meals supplied to his children such an amount as the local education authority shall decide, and that unless the parent can show that "by reason of circumstances other than his own default to pay the amount" he is unable to pay, "this amount may be recovered summarily as a civil debt."

But the Act also provides that if the children attending any elementary school are "unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for

¹ Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906: 6 Edward VII., ch. 57.

them," and if there are no funds from charitable sources, or if the funds from such sources are insufficient to provide the food requisite, then the Board of Education may, upon the application of a local education authority, authorise this authority to expend on food such an amount as will not exceed that which would be met by a halfpenny rate over the area of their authority. The Act has been so drawn as to attain, if possible, these objects: First, to insure that hungry children shall be fed; secondly, to make those parents who can, but don't, feed their children properly pay for their being fed; and thirdly, to encourage the provision of the food necessary by charitable agencies rather than by the State. The Act has not yet been long enough in force to enable us to say how far it will fulfil these objects.

The strongest argument for providing meals for school children is that the State can no more afford to let these children grow up physically defective than it can afford to let them grow up uneducated. Already the cost of the physically defective is a heavy burden upon the community, both through the Poor Law and through charity. Will it not actually be an economy on the part of the community to pay something in order to cut off, as far as possible, the supply of the physically defective?

The summary of the evidence upon the "Feeding of School Children" given before the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, and printed in the first volume of their Report¹ should be carefully studied by the social worker. That a very large number of the children attending the elementary schools were underfed was asserted or allowed by practically every witness, though upon the exact proportion of underfed children to the whole number the opinions of the various witnesses greatly differed. By Dr. Eichholz² it was placed as high as 16 per cent. of the total number of the children in the elementary schools of London. The following words may be said to embody the impression of the committee after

¹ 1904 [Cd. 2175].

² One of H.M. inspectors of schools (Par. 332).

hearing a large number of expert witnesses: "With scarcely an exception, there was a general consensus of opinion that the time has come when the State should realise the necessity of insuring adequate nourishment to children in attendance at school."¹ It was said to be the height of cruelty to subject half-starved children to the processes of education, besides being a short-sighted policy, in that the progress of such children is inadequate and disappointing; and it was, further, the subject of general agreement that, as a rule, no purely voluntary association could successfully cope with the full extent of the evil. Even those witnesses who were inclined to think that its magnitude had been much exaggerated, did not question the advisability of feeding, by some means or other, those children who are underfed, provided it could be done quietly and without impairing parental responsibility.² It is in how to insure the fulfilment of the condition stated in the last four words that the crux of the difficulty lies. Fortunately, by the Act of 1906, we have the legal right of demanding repayment from parents who can afford to pay. But we know how frequently a law remains a dead letter simply through want of care and courage to administer it strictly. It must be one of the duties of the social worker to see, as far as possible, that this, like other laws, is duly administered, and certainly to see that its existence is not ignored.

Before leaving this subject I should like to give two quotations, both of which may be said to be very hopeful and to put the brighter side of the matter very strongly before us.

The first is from the Report from which I have just quoted: "It may be as well to state that the general trend of opinion was to the effect that the ultimate means of dealing with the difficulty lay in those forces of social education which have been described above, and in the operation of the great body of ameliorative tendencies which would raise the general condition of the poor, and foster a sense of

¹ Embodied in the Act of 1906.

² Par. 348.

parental responsibility, spreading knowledge and enlightenment in their train.”¹

The second is from the same article by Professor Henry Jones to which I have above alluded: “I believe that the dangers of lowering the sense of parental responsibility amongst the poor are exaggerated. The obligations of parentage will not be loosened on the hearths of the respectable poor by any State regulations. . . . The children of the poor are not made over to the care of nurses, nor sent from home in order to be educated. They are brought up around the mothers’ knees, and learn early to bear their share in the daily cares of the home, and to brighten them with their sunshine; and they are apt on that account to mean more to their father and mother. On the other hand, where the obligations of the parents are easily loosened, it seems to be time for the State to interfere on behalf of its coming citizens.

“But even if the danger were considerable I should still say, after Plato and Aristotle, that the first, the paramount care of the State is to educate its citizens, and that the State is, in the last resort, an educational institution. In performing this function towards the children, it can afford to run risks, for *these* risks are run in a great cause.”²

¹ Par. 329.

² *Hibbert Journal*, January 1906, p. 313. The four articles by Professor Henry Jones on “The Working Faith of the Social Reformer,” printed in the numbers for October 1905, January, April, and July 1906, are well worth most careful study.

CHAPTER XIV

TEMPERANCE WORK

OF all the various evils with which the social reformer meets, I consider the excessive expenditure upon alcoholic drink by far the greatest. I prefer to describe it thus rather than to speak of "intemperance," because to most people "intemperance" implies intoxication; and either a man or a woman may expend regularly, in proportion to their income, a very large sum on alcoholic drink, without ever being guilty of what the world calls drunkenness. I have already in another connection quoted the saying that "one half the world has no idea how the other half lives," but there is no application of this saying more true than in regard to the expenditure upon alcoholic liquor and the results, both direct and indirect, of that expenditure. I would go so far as to assert that only those who have made a special study of the subject, and one extending over a long period, have any conception of how much of the poverty, sickness, and misery of the working classes of this country is due to this cause. In the opening chapter of his book on *Intemperance*,¹ the Bishop of Croydon writes: "This I know that, although I have been directly interested in the work of temperance reform for over five-and-twenty years, and have attended a great many meetings on the subject, and have heard speeches almost without number about it, the researches which the writing of this little book required have proved a revelation to me, and have shown that I had not half understood the real dimensions of the evil. With others it may be as it was with myself."

I regard this ignorance as the chief reason why it is so

¹ In "Handbooks for the Clergy."

difficult to bring about temperance reform in the United Kingdom. On the one hand, we have the huge vested interests of the "drink trade" with its almost countless ramifications extending into all classes and sections of society. On the other hand, we have a body of men and women who have studied the subject, who know from almost daily contact with the results of it, how frightful are the evils which issue from excessive drinking, and who are therefore really in earnest to promote temperance reform. [It is because these men and women know how appalling present conditions are that they speak as strongly as they do and are, consequently, termed "fanatics."] Between those two bodies stands a third section of the community—also a very numerous one—composed of those who have no real knowledge, no adequate conception of the magnitude of the evil, and therefore who, from sheer ignorance, are apt to discount the statements of the temperance reformers. Very frequently, owing to their ignorance, or to their having some pecuniary interest in "the trade," these people take the wrong side when a movement is made to lessen the excessive temptations to drink to which the poor are subject.

The three direct evils from drink with which the social worker constantly meets are poverty, sickness or ill-health, and crime. The last two, of course, are often indirect results of drink—that is, they are the results of poverty, of which drink is the cause; but each of the three, apart from the others, is frequently a direct result of drink.

Only those who have made the computation have any idea of how much the working classes of this country spend on alcoholic liquor. If we divide the total sum spent on this in England and Wales in 1907 by the estimated population in that year we find the average amount spent per head to be £3 19s. If we take the average family to consist of five persons we find the average spent per family on drink to be £19 15s. If from the total population we subtract the very large number of persons, including children, who never touch alcoholic liquor, the average spent by those who do take it would work out at a

much larger sum. Of course, there are families among the rich who spend on this far more than £19 15s. a year; on the other hand, there are thousands of homes into which it never enters. Making every allowance for error, it has been calculated that we cannot estimate the average amount spent by a working class family on alcoholic drink at less than from 5s. to 6s. per week. Here, again, we must allow for the families which do not take it, so that among those who do the average amount spent is really higher than this. The real significance of these figures is not seen all at once. Let us take a working class district of 5000 people, that is, of about 1000 families. We may estimate that in this district £260 per week is spent on drink. Suppose we are content to take three-fourths of this sum as the amount by which these people would actually benefit if they were to become abstainers, and then let us think what an additional sum of £10,000 a year¹ in spending power would make among such a population! Then, again, we must remember, as all those who have carefully studied the question will allow, that it is really among the very poorest, *i.e.* it is among those who can least afford it, that the expenditure upon drink is relatively the highest. One proof of this may be obtained from the fact that it is in the poorest districts that the opportunities, and so the temptations, to drink are most plentiful. In Mr. Rowntree's book on *Poverty* he tells² how "a small, dingy-looking public-house situated in a narrow street in the heart of a slum district," was watched for seventeen hours on Saturday, July 7, 1900. "During those hours 258 men, 179 women, and 113 children entered this house." But he also tells us that "in close proximity to this house is a working-men's club, where much drinking is indulged in, and within five minutes' walk of it are thirteen other public-houses, three of them within a hundred yards." From Miss Jebb's *Cambridge; a Brief Study of Social Questions*, I take the following:³ "The distance from the east side of Wellington Street to Hutchinson Court, on the south side of New-

¹ About 4s. per week per household!

² Pp. 314, 315.

³ Pp. 96, 97.

market Road, is 796 yards, and in this length of road (both sides) there are twenty-two public-houses (*i.e.* one public-house every thirty-six yards). The distance from the north side of Northampton Street to the 'Wheatsheaf' Inn on Huntingdon Road is 510 yards. In this length of road (both sides) there are ten public-houses (*i.e.* one public house every fifty-one yards)." Another method of estimating the amount which must be spent on drink by the poor who live in such districts as these is to form a conception of the sum of money which must be taken in these houses in order to pay the brewers who own them and the landlords and their servants who work them.¹

But it is not only in the public-houses that the working class spend money on drink. We must not forget the clubs which are now so numerous in the lower parts of our large towns. Mr. Rowntree publishes a balance-sheet of one of these having 417 members. The "steward's takings" in this club for a year were £2274, or an average of £5 8s. 10d. per member. He adds that "the gross profit on refreshments (*i.e.* chiefly drink) sold was £374, or 38 per cent. upon their purchase price." He says further, "the expenditure per head would have been greatly increased, and the gross profits have shown an enormously higher percentage, were it not for the fact that the prices paid for drink by the members are lower by about 33 per cent. than those ordinarily charged in public-houses."² In order to test whether Mr. Rowntree's figures were exceptional or not, I obtained the balance-sheet of a similar working-men's club in a poor district close to Manchester, and I found that the average sum spent per annum per member in that club was within a few pence of that spent in the club to which Mr. Rowntree refers.

Temperance reformers are constantly being told that "you cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament;" but by wise legislation and by strict administration of the law much may be done to reduce the temptations to drink.

¹ It is probable that to-day some "Houses" do not "pay," and are kept on simply to preserve the licence.

² *Poverty*, pp. 328-330.

A very striking instance of what may be done in this way is what occurred in Liverpool when a serious effort was made in this direction. The following account of this is given by Bishop Pereira :—

“The magistrates were impressed with the need of taking action ; the Watch Committee was reconstituted, a scheme of supervision of licensed premises was established, and a gradual diminution of the excessive number of licensed houses was determined on, by closing each year those which were undesirable and badly managed. Back and side-doors to public-houses were in all cases closed, thus reducing secret drinking and making supervision easier.

“The results of this simple, lawful, and perfectly fair policy have been these :—

“(1) 339 houses have been closed in eleven years.

“(2) The police force has been reduced by 200 men, causing an annual saving of £8000 a year to the city.

“(3) The number of prosecutions for drunkenness has been reduced from 16,042 to 4317 in spite of a largely increased population, while the number of indictable crimes of all kinds has fallen from 30,889 to 19,863.

“It would be difficult, indeed, to have clearer proof that firmly and determinedly administered, good laws may greatly help in protecting people from themselves, and in raising their general tone by improving their surroundings.”¹

Unfortunately in this country at the present time, while the rich and well-to-do are able to insure themselves against excessive temptation, the poor are not often in this position. Suppose that in what is termed a “good” neighbourhood, *i.e.* a “residential,” one, two, or three licences were applied for, there would at once be an outcry and a determined opposition. The inhabitants and property owners would at once say “they could not have the neighbourhood spoiled,” its “character would be lowered,” its respectability would at once be impaired. But such people forget that the poor are compelled to live in neighbourhoods where often there is a public-house at every other street corner. It appears that local option is

¹ “Handbooks for the Clergy,” *Intemperance*, pp. 91, 92.

very strongly at work in the one, and not at all in the other. And I believe it is true that, whenever an attempt has been made, even in a poor neighbourhood, to take a census of opinion on this subject, the majority have always voted for a decrease of facilities.

But excessive expenditure on drink does not lead only to poverty, it leads just as surely to sickness and ill-health. Most striking evidence on this will be found in the *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Degeneration*. Among other evidence adduced the following figures from the Registrar-General's returns were put in. Out of 61,215 men of all classes between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-five 1000 die every year, this death-rate being 16.3 per 1000. Out of 61,215 publicans between the same ages 1642 die every year, this death-rate being 26.8 per 1000; out of 62,215 Rechabites (Abstainers) 560 die annually, this death-rate being 9.1 per 1000.¹

Other striking figures were submitted which showed that the death-rate among the infants of drunken mothers was nearly two and a-half times that among the infants of sober mothers of the same stock. Two doctors gave evidence which showed that alcoholic persons were much more vulnerable to tuberculosis and to all forms of what are termed inflammatory disorders, and that "such persons also suffer much longer from the effects of any malady, thus involving their dependents in prolonged privation."² The Report further states that, "as the result of the evidence laid before them they are convinced that the abuse of alcoholic stimulants is a most potent and deadly agent of physical deterioration."³

This Report is also most valuable for the advice it gives upon methods which may with advantage be pursued in the cause of temperance. For instance "every step gained towards the solution of the housing problem is something won for sobriety. The provision of properly selected and carefully prepared food ranks next in value, and to this end . . . there is much room for training of a socially educative character among girls and the younger

¹ Par. 160.

² Par. 172.

³ Par. 173.

generation of women.”¹ Once more, the committee reported that, “the want of easily accessible and attractive means of recreation makes the public-house the only centre of social relaxation.”² Finally the committee stated how impressed they were “with the conviction that some general educative impulse is in request which will bring home to the community at large the gravity of the issue and the extent to which it is within individual effort to promote and make effective the conclusions of expert opinion.”³

Much has been said of recent years about the connection between lunacy and drink, and while we have very strong evidence to prove that generally the health of the community is improving this is apparently not the case so far as lunacy is concerned; and of all the various causes of lunacy there can be no doubt but that drink is by far the most prolific. I must not multiply figures, but of the patients admitted to the various asylums—public and private—in England and Wales during the five years 1898–1902, the lunacy of 22.8 per cent. of the men and of 9.5 per cent. of the women was attributed to drink. Also evidence was placed before the Committee on Physical Deterioration which showed that “a large and, in some cases, an increasing number of admissions of both sexes are due to drink, and an increase of general paralysis among lunacy patients tells the same tale.”⁴ Some of the figures put before the committee were very striking: for instance, in Sunderland, 38.6 per cent. of the cases of men and 20 per cent. of the cases of women admitted were due to drink, while in the Gartloch Asylum for the city of Glasgow these proportions were actually 45 per cent. and 26.8 per cent.

Then, again, drink is by far the most prolific of all the causes of crime, and long has been so. Two hundred years ago, Chief Justice Hales said of a catalogue of the worst crimes: “I have found that, if they were divided into five parts, four of these have been the product of excessive drinking.”⁵ Lord Chief Justice Coleridge said: “Judges

¹ Par. 174.

² Par. 175.

³ Par. 176.

⁴ Pars. 169, 170.

⁵ *Intemperance*, p. 3.

are weary with calling attention to drink as the principal cause of crime. If we could make England sober, we would shut up nine-tenths of her prisons.”¹ It is well known that there is an exceptionally great amount of drinking about Christmas time. In January 1882, and again in 1904, the *Alliance News* published a list of the more serious crimes reported in the newspapers as having been committed in England, Wales, and Scotland in the fortnight after the Christmas Days of 1881 and 1903. Of those which had been committed entirely under the influence of drink there were, in the former period, 14 murders, 16 suicides, 9 attempted suicides, 53 violent assaults, 54 assaults on the police, 65 assaults on women, etc.; and, in the latter period, there were 5 drink-caused murders, 3 manslaughter, 29 suicides, 21 stabbing cases, 13 outrageous assaults, 67 assaults on police, 68 cases of robbery or damages to property, etc.²

I have dwelt at length on this subject of intemperance for two reasons: first, because I believe it is by far the most prolific cause of all our social evils—indeed, I would go so far as to say that by itself it is more prolific of evil than all other causes added together; secondly, because I believe that the *extent* of the mischief which it does is most imperfectly realised even by the majority of so-called social workers. If I were asked, “Of all kinds of social work—that is, of work whose object is the social improvement of the people—which do you consider at once the most essential and the most directly useful?” I should answer without the slightest hesitation, work which has for its object the promotion of temperance; for if we could abolish intemperance, then forthwith at least three-fourths of our social evils would vanish. I might then be asked, “How do you think temperance may be best promoted?” or “What do you consider to be the most efficacious methods by which to fight intemperance?” I should answer that we must not be content with employing one method; we must use several.

First, we must teach the children much more, and much

¹ *Intemperance*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

more plainly, about the *effects* of alcohol. In both Day and Sunday School the subject must be much more frequently brought before the scholars. They must be shown again and again the processes and results of alcoholic poisoning.

Secondly, I would bring the subject more prominently forward in our teaching of adults. I would see that no one could plead ignorance of the evils which not only intemperance, but our immense expenditure upon alcoholic drink, is producing.

In England such information is only supplied through the agency of the various temperance societies. In some countries it is made known by public authority. Not long ago 25,000 copies of a placard of which the following are the chief points were posted in and around Paris by the Prefect of the Seine and the Director of Public Charity: ¹ "Alcoholism is chronic poisoning, due to the habit of drinking spirits, even though such indulgence does not lead to unruly drunkenness or even tipsiness. It is a mistake to say that alcohol is of service to men engaged in work that puts a strain upon the muscles, or that it gives heart to the workman and enables him to withstand fatigue. The artificial excitement it gives rise to is soon followed by nervous depression and weakness. The truth is, that alcohol is of no use to any one, and is injurious to every one who drinks it. . . . The habit of toping wrecks the home, destroys family life, the health, the sense of duty, brings on a splenetic disgust for work, and poverty and crime," etc.

Thirdly, I would rouse every one who even professes to care in the least for the welfare of the poor to agitate for the reduction of the temptations to which especially the very poor are subject. I would show them that while we cannot by Act of Parliament insure universal sobriety, we can by this means do much to prevent temptations to drink being forced upon the poor at every turn.

Fourthly, I would do everything that is possible to provide *counter-attractions*. We spend public money on

¹ *Intemperance*, pp. 21, 22.

public parks, where, in fine weather and in summer, people may congregate and enjoy social intercourse and often harmless and useful recreation. Why should not public money be expended on public halls, well lighted and well ventilated and warmed, where in wet weather and in winter evenings people may also meet together for social intercourse and social amusement? I would go so far as to say that in such large, lofty, airy rooms, drink, moderate in quantity and good in quality, might be sold; but there should be no little secret bars, tucked away in side-streets, and to which people can gain access by back-doors. If men and women wish to take drink they must do it where they can be seen by their associates, and where the very publicity of the action would do much to prevent its abuse.

There is one more fact I would bring before every earnest social worker. With the very poor and the ignorant frequently there is no half-way house between intemperance and total abstinence. For those who are tempted to drink to excess total abstinence is the one condition of safety. Therefore, if any one wishes to do active and practical temperance work among the very poor he must, I believe, be a total abstainer himself. I am urging this from a long experience in such work. I am urging it from a utilitarian point of view. To abstain ourselves is the best of all appeals to the tempted, and to those liable to succumb to temptation; for it is personal proof that alcoholic liquor is absolutely unnecessary for the maintenance of health. We are constantly liable to be met with the remark, "I suppose you get a glass yourself when you want it?" There can be but one effective reply to this.

The great majority of the Nonconformist ministers of this country are now abstainers. In the matter of temperance reform they have nobly identified themselves with the wrongs and the best aspirations of the working classes. This action has, I believe, done more than anything else to gain for them immense influence with that section of the working classes who wish to free themselves from the thralldom of this terrible slavery. I know, from personal experience, how easy it is to be charged with fanaticism,

with intemperate language, with intemperate advocacy. But fanaticism is sometimes only another name for earnestness, for that kind of earnestness which springs from a wide knowledge, and a clear realisation of the extent, and the deadly effects, of the evil or the danger we are combating.

What is true of Nonconformists cannot, alas, be said so generally of the members (or of the clergy) of the Church of England—for whom this book is primarily written. As Bishop Pereira says :¹ “There have been leaders, here and there, among the clergy who have done noble work ; proportionately more rarely still, devoted laymen who have laboured under a sense of imperative duty to make things better, but of the great body of the members of our Church it must be said that, even now, they show an apathy and an indifference towards temperance work which is as strange as it is sad.”

¹ *Intemperance*, p. 20.

CHAPTER XV

CO-ORDINATION AND ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

THE aggregate amount of the work being done to-day in order to improve social conditions is enormous. A very great deal of this work is voluntary, while a considerable proportion is paid for. We must not contrast too sharply the paid and the voluntary worker, for both must live. If a man or woman has leisure—and who has not at least some leisure?—it is surely their duty to do something for the good of others, and especially for those in a less fortunate position than their own. On the other hand, there are many who make some kind of social work their profession and to it devote their lives. These require and rightly receive remuneration for their work. It is comparatively few who can, without payment, devote the main proportion of their time and strength to public work. When the possibility of this exists, and the opportunity is embraced, we have a very noble form of life.

To-day we often hear voluntary work described as “amateur,” and paid work as “professional,” and both words are apt to be pronounced in a somewhat sneering tone. It is assumed that voluntary work must be more or less inefficient, and that paid work must be done simply for the purpose of making a living. Neither of these assumptions need be true, and neither is justifiable. Both must be made untrue, and both are so of the best workers. The voluntary worker who loves his work will make himself as efficient as possible; the paid worker is frequently found doing much more for others than he is paid for.

But, unfortunately, we do find very often the voluntary

and the paid worker acting independently of each other. The one is apt to take little or no account of what the other is doing. The expert paid worker is apt to ignore, sometimes to look down upon, the efforts of the voluntary worker. On the other hand, the voluntary worker often pursues his self-appointed task oblivious to what the paid worker is doing. An example will explain my meaning: Here, in the slum of a large town, is a case of sickness and poverty combined. Let us think of the number of people who may, indeed probably will, be visiting this particular case. Among the paid workers we may assume the dispensary or Poor Law doctor, the sanitary inspector, a "health visitor" paid by one society, a "city missionary" paid by another, possibly a district nurse paid by a third; in addition to these, very probably there will be the clergyman of the parish. Among voluntary workers—I speak from experience—there will be, first, the district visitor, and, if the patient is a child, his or her Sunday School teacher, if an adult, perhaps the conductor of some meeting or class which the patient attends. In addition to these I have frequently found visiting the same patient two or three "kind-hearted" women, probably belonging to different "Churches," who have self-appointed roving commissions to help where they *assume* that help is needed.

Among the paid workers, with the exception of the clergyman and the city missionary, each will probably be quite clear about what the others are doing. For instance, the doctor, the nurse, and the sanitary inspector, will be acting in close communication. It is generally otherwise with the voluntary workers. I have known at least four "kind-hearted" people, each unconscious of the others, visit and relieve the same case in the course of one day. The evils issuing from this are manifold: The poor are tempted to deception; when relief is offered them, they do not say they are already receiving help from one or more other sources. Then, while one case is receiving too much help, another equally or more deserving may suffer from neglect. Even among some paid workers there

is often a want of co-ordination of effort: *e.g.* the city missionary is apt to regard his work as wholly spiritual; he will visit a case without inquiring whether a doctor has been called in, or whether the services of a nurse are required; he may fail to expostulate if he finds a phthysical patient in a room which is almost an air-tight compartment, or may never think of acquainting the sanitary authority if he finds a small flood from a deficient drain in some court. Sometimes a nurse will fail to make known to those who could supply it that extra sick nourishment is needed. One very common mistake which voluntary workers make is in failing to work *through* the authorities; they do not seek the counsel of the relieving officer, or of the medical officer of health, when the help and advice of these might be most useful.

I have worked in a parish where a large amount of trustee money was given away annually by the trustees themselves, or more frequently through their wives, daughters, and friends, to whom the distribution of it was delegated. I rarely found any effort made to discover whether the recipients were receiving help from other sources, or even from other trustees of the same charity. Then, I found there was a tendency to continue to help the same cases year after year, without making careful inquiry whether there was any change in the condition of the beneficiaries. Also, there was little or no attempt to find out new and possibly more deserving cases. One evil result of this state of things was that certain recipients began to look upon their yearly, or quarterly, gift as a right. On more than one occasion, when I have ventured to express my doubts as to the suitability of one of these, I have been met with the reply, "They have always been accustomed to have it."

When a case is thoroughly deserving the evil effects of overlapping may not be more serious than to encourage the temptation to suppress information about other sources of assistance; but where the case is undeserving or unsuitable, the results are frequently disastrous. There are many cases in which what appears at first sight to be hard

treatment is the truest kindness ; there are some cases in which the only hope of our being able to do any good lies in our having the power to withdraw all material help. Here is one : A family consists of a man, his wife, and six children ; the man can earn 32s. a week, but he drinks and gambles a large share of his wages ; the children are found to be in rags and half starved. Kindly-hearted people begin, independently of each other, to help and "relieve" this case, especially when they find that the wife is a hard-working woman, and the home clean, but nearly destitute of furniture. In a short time each of these kindly-hearted people who has been giving liberally becomes surprised that the conditions of the case do not improve. The real fact is that the husband takes home a smaller and smaller proportion of his wages ; he drinks and gambles more than ever. Had these good people communicated with me, and been content to let me invoke the services of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and perhaps ultimately the police, then compulsion might, to his own great advantage, have been exercised upon this man to provide for his family.

The last thing I should do in the great majority of cases is to advise people to apply to the Poor Law, or to go into the workhouse ; but there are certain cases with which no other agency can deal satisfactorily, and there are some for which the workhouse is the only proper place. Such cases, as a rule, can only be forced into the workhouse by the entire withdrawal of all charitable relief ; the difficulty often lies in finding out the various channels of this relief and in stopping them. The kind of cases I have especially in mind are those of chronic invalids for whom no proper care or maintenance can be found, and of hopelessly intemperate parents with young children, and who take no proper care of these. Then, as I have already shown, the existence of "sweated" labour in a house is often due either to out-relief being granted to some member of the family or to charitable relief being unwisely given. We must remember that either doles thoughtlessly bestowed, or out-relief freely granted, are sure to tend to depress the level of wages in a very poor

district. Ultimately, though they do not realise it, the poor themselves suffer, while the sweater profits.

The best of all principles to follow in helping people is so to assist them that in as short a time as possible assistance may become unnecessary. We must aim at making self-effort possible, and we must by all means encourage this. Where we find skilful co-ordination among helpers towards this end it is often possible to achieve it. What we too often actually find is one worker aiming at it, while another is unconsciously preventing or at least hindering it. Here is an instance from my own personal experience: Two extremely wise and capable women workers started a "collecting bank" in a very poor part of a parish of which I at that time had charge. By most careful instruction and encouragement they were gradually and very successfully teaching people to save against times of sickness, misfortune, or want of employment. Suddenly another woman of large means, but very little wisdom, commences to "take an interest" in these poor people: in other words, wherever she found what she believed to be need, or heard a pitiful tale, there she helped lavishly. Within a very short time the first two workers came to me saying that their efforts to teach thrift were undone; they could now get hardly any one to put into the bank. What was the use, these poor people argued, of saving against misfortune, if as soon as you were in distress, whether from your own fault or not, you were sure to get help. Actually the moral character of the district, which had been steadily rising, began rapidly to fall to its old evil level.

Many efforts have been made in recent years to bring about the organisation—the regulation and co-ordination—of charitable help, indeed of various kinds of social work; for if personal effort is not to be wasted, and if all the material help available is to be employed to the best advantage, some kind of organisation, some careful co-ordination of persons and methods, is absolutely necessary.

Two attempts, by very different methods, to accomplish this object stand out prominently before all others. One is that of the well-known "Charity Organisation Society";

the other consists in various modifications of the somewhat less familiar "Elberfeld system"—societies which in England are generally known as Leagues, or Guilds, of Help.

(1) THE CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY

There is no one society from which those who would work intelligently and usefully among the poor can learn so much as from the C.O.S. This society has its offices¹ and central organisation in London, and it has branches in various parts of the kingdom; but these branches, while they work on the same principles and according to the same methods as the London Society, are entirely independent of it. My advice to every one who would work efficiently among the poor is: If you can, join this society and watch how its agents and trained members work. You cannot fail to learn much that is useful. You may not agree with all that is done, and you are sure to hear the society very sharply criticised, for, like all organisations which set a high standard, and which work upon the principle of *demanding* rather than of giving, and of calling forth effort rather than of doing everything for people, the C.O.S. has many enemies. Of course, a society may have the most definite principles, and may lay down the most definite methods of work, but the application of these principles and the way in which its methods are actually put into practice will necessarily vary with the individual workers. For instance, we may have the entirely sound principle of trying to call forth effort in those whom we would help; we may have the essential method of full investigation, but the particular way *in* which, and the exact extent *to* which, self-effort is demanded or encouraged must depend on the individual who applies the principle: so we may have the essentially necessary method of careful investigation, but the manner in which this investigation is made will again vary with the particular worker. I have known the most thorough investigation so made that those

¹ Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.

who were being investigated did not in the least resent the operation; on the other hand, I have known an unskilful investigator so do his work that every question he asked was like rubbing an open sore. Applications of both principles and methods depend alike for their success upon "tact," which is usually only another name for skilful, that is, for delicate and sympathetic handling. A grip which may be necessary to lift a bar of iron would shiver into fragments a delicate piece of glass or china. The C.O.S. quite rightly lays stress on very full investigation, but it cannot insure that, whenever possible, its agents shall always employ the method of indirectness, and be as careful as possible so to obtain information as not to appear to be seeking it. The society has, in fact, many enemies, some very bitter ones; indeed, its very name to some people is like the proverbial red rag to the proverbial bull. But this enmity may generally be accounted for, either by ignorance of its real objects, or by the indiscretion of its agents, or because it frequently exposes the utter worthlessness, the absolute uselessness of the methods pursued by its detractors; and no one likes to have their idols broken, much less their pet cases proved to be frauds.

Apparently the society is hardly growing in popularity. For one reason the spirit of the immediate present is against it; also I must confess I think that some of its adherents are too apt to assume that where there is distress there is some cause for this which either is, or has been, under the control of the sufferers. Actually this may be true, but surely we must view very differently the distress which is the result of ignorance or of want of skill in the art of living and the distress which is the issue of wilful and conscious wrong-doing. Distress from both these causes might be brought under the head of "preventible evils," but the degree of blame to be attached in the one case is surely very different from that in the other.

If I were asked to state quite candidly where I think the C.O.S. sometimes errs, I should say that it is rather too apt to assume that we are living in the best of all possible worlds, that it sometimes expects from the poor, in the

way of self-effort, more than they are able to give, and that in the common dilemma, whether people or their circumstances are most to blame, it is too inclined to lay the blame upon the people.

Another objection frequently made to the society—this is an unreasonable one—is that its methods are expensive. For instance, its paid agents, who devote their whole time to the work, may receive anything from £80 to £150, or even more, per annum. But skilful work must be paid for. And at present there is many a town whose inhabitants might save themselves more than ten times the latter of these sums, from imposition or from recklessly given outdoor relief, if they would pay for, and listen to, the teaching of a really skilful C.O.S. trained agent. I have heard people say that it has cost more than £200 in a year to disburse less than that sum in charity; “Just think,” they will add, “how many poor people could have been helped by that £200!” But the C.O.S. is not a relief society. Its main object is not to give relief, but to see that all the funds in a town or a district which are available for relief are wisely bestowed. Incidentally it may, and generally does, even increase the amount given in relief by proving to the charitable that, if the poor are to be helped effectually, they must (where help is given) be helped liberally: at the same time the society is sure to prevent relief being given to the undeserving and in unsuitable ways—that is, it will prevent charity from being wasted, or from being made actually productive of evil.

Where there is a branch of the C.O.S. at work, or where there is any intention of starting one, I think it is most important that its supporters should demand that its labours shall not consist only, not even chiefly, in what is termed “case” work; but that it shall be directly an educational agency with regard to the true principles and methods of social work.

It is in the literature which it has published, and still continues to publish, that the C.O.S. is most useful. Much of this literature, through which it has wonderfully affected public opinion in the right direction, is not only extremely

valuable, but is indeed quite indispensable to the social worker who would be well equipped. The *Charity Organisation Review*, which it publishes monthly, is a mine of information, and its *Occasional Papers* are generally excellent, for they are the work of level-headed experts, that is, of men and women trained to their work, and who know from experience the various ramifications of the subjects upon which they write and upon which they are well qualified to express a judgment.

One great advantage from membership of the society is this: The C.O.S. has now branches in so many places, and its various agents are so willing to help all earnest workers, that should any one become interested in people whose history it is desirable to trace in places other than where they are now living, it is frequently possible to obtain, in confidence, this desirable information, which may assist in dealing with the case in a satisfactory way, that is, in the light of knowledge which, except for this agency, it might be most difficult to procure.

(2) GUILDS, OR LEAGUES OF HELP

The method on which these are worked is as follows: A town is carefully divided into a number of districts, each of which is placed under the care, or supervision, of some one who is supposed to be more or less of an expert in dealing with the poor. Under each of these "Heads," as the one in care of the district is termed, there are a number of workers, each of whom is supposed to look after a much smaller sub-district. These sub-districts are so arranged that not more than about half-a-dozen possible cases of distress can be under the care and supervision of the worker. Suppose that some outsider hears of a case of distress, he is requested to communicate with the Head of the district, who at once asks the worker in whose sub-district the case lies to investigate the case thoroughly and report to him. He may, if necessary, at once order suitable temporary relief, and then the full report of the case is brought before the next meeting of

the workers of that district, which generally takes place at least fortnightly. The best means of helping the case is then carefully considered and decided upon. The case may be one which requires prolonged help or supervision, in that event it is considered at each meeting of the workers until it can, from one cause or another, be removed from the list. Besides the district committee there is a committee consisting of the Heads of the various divisions or districts, which meets under the presidency of the Head of the whole Guild or League, who is also assisted by a secretary, either paid or unpaid.

The objects of the "Guild of Help" are very similar to those of the C.O.S.—the chief being the proper organisation of charitable help, and the prevention of neglect on the one hand and of overlapping on the other. The Heads of districts are supposed to know all about the various charitable agencies of the town, and also to be in communication with people who are willing to help cases which can be thoroughly recommended. Then, a Guild of Help assists untrained workers to become efficient by enabling them to work under the direction of an efficient Head. Also, through the workers, not only relief, but sympathy, oversight, and general care are provided for those who need encouragement (or it may be warning) and general supervision.

In theory the Guild of Help is excellent, and, where a sufficient number of workers can be procured, who are willing to learn and to work according to rule, and where the Heads of the districts are really efficient, the Guild does an excellent work. It is in the inability to guarantee the fulfilment of these two conditions that in practice it frequently fails. It is found to be difficult to obtain either sufficient workers or efficient Heads. If the workers are too few, each will have too many cases. If the Heads are not efficient (and so unable to act with judgment) then harm, instead of good, may be done. The system has not as yet been at work in this country long enough for it to have had a fair trial; in another five or ten years we shall be better able from experience to pass an opinion upon it.

In this country such an organisation is, of course, purely voluntary, and supplementary to the Poor Law system; but in Elberfeld it is part of that system, and works in connection with, and under the supervision of, the various paid officers of the Poor Law. In England the workers in a Guild of Help are entirely voluntary, they offer their services; in Elberfeld they are appointed by the town for poor administration (*Städtische Armenverwaltung*), they are confirmed in their office by the Municipal Council, and refusal to accept office entails penalties prescribed by Prussian law.¹ Again, in England the relief distributed by the workers is purely of a charitable nature; in Elberfeld it is provided from the taxes. When these facts are remembered, it will at once be seen that it is extremely difficult to make satisfactory comparisons between the two systems and their relative effect upon the condition of the poor. The Elberfeld system of Poor Relief may be effective; it certainly is not cheap, the amount expended there upon the poor, reckoned per head of the population, being considerably above that in most large English towns. Both the League of Help and the Elberfeld system bear very striking resemblance to the plan tried in Glasgow now nearly ninety years ago by Dr. Chalmers, and which, so long as he remained at its head, proved to be remarkably successful. A very full and deeply interesting account of Dr. Chalmers' work has been admirably written by Mr. Neville Masterman in a book which every worker among the poor ought to study.²

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL UNION

This is another organisation which is of immense help to all Churchmen and Churchwomen who are interested in social service and in the work of social reform. It embraces communicants of the Church of England of all schools of thought and who belong to all political parties.

¹ See *The Elberfeld Poor Law System* (a blue book), C. 5341, price 9d. (1888), pp. 11, 12.

² *Chalmers on Charity*. London, 1900.

Its chief aim is educative—the obtaining and diffusion of knowledge upon all subjects connected with social welfare. Like the C.O.S. it has a large number of branches in various parts of the country, and wherever possible every social worker should join a branch, for in its meetings he is sure to find inspiration, and in its discussions he will gain useful information. Again, like the C.O.S. it has an extensive and useful literature. It sets before its members each year some definite subject of immediate interest and importance for both personal and combined study, and, further, it gives most helpful advice as to how this study may be pursued. The object of the Union has been stated to be “to raise Social Reform from a question of expediency into a Christian duty.”

The following are the principles to which members assent:—

(1) To claim for the Christian Law the ultimate authority to rule social practice.

(2) To study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present time.

(3) To present Christ in practical life as the living Master and King, the enemy of wrong and selfishness, the power of righteousness and love.

L'ENVOI

Many Causes have conspired to make the present the age of the Social Question, and many influences and circumstances have enlarged the stream of sympathy and social obligation which flows through the midst of the present time. Yet it is perfectly evident that the Christian Church has at its command both a quantity and a quality of social power, which, whenever they have been fairly utilised, have had quite unparalleled effect. . . .

Never before has the world seen the mechanism of the social

question, and the power of the Christian Church to

bring about a new social order.

The Christian Church has at its command

order adapted as it now is for the conveyance of social energy. The ample channel thus provided waits for the power of the Christian life, and as the sufficient stream leaps forth into the varied activities of the world, it sings, as it flows, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (Peabody, "Jesus Christ and the Social Question.")

THE END

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